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A  
**DIALOGUE,**  
Concerning  
The Practicall use  
O F  
**INFANT-BAPTISME :**

PENNED,  
And Published for a profitable Diver-  
sion from the hot and eager Disputes of this Age  
concerning the lawfulness, to an holy im-  
provement of the grounds, and practice thereof.

A S A L S O,  
For the satisfaction of those who lay it aside  
altogether, or practise it coldly, and sleightly,  
because they know not of what advantage it is  
to a Christian practice.

Whereunto is added A 2<sup>d</sup> DIALOGUE  
on the same subject.

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By *Simon Ford*, B. D. and Minister  
to the Congregation at *Laurence Church* in  
*R E A D I N G.*

---

*L O N D O N.*  
Printed by *T. M.* for *John Rothwel*, at the *Fountain*  
in *Gold-smiths Row* in *Cheap-side*. 1657.

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V I R O

*Generis nobilitate, vera pietate;*

E T

*Rerum gestarum celebritate;  
admodum Insigni,*

GUILIELMO WALLER  
EQUITI;

NEC NON

A N N Æ,

*Nobilissima (juxta) & pientissima  
CONJUGI;*

DUPPLICEM HUNC

*De usu Pædo-Baptismi Tractatulum;*

E T

*Annexam Conciunculam;*

*In perpetuae gratitudinis Testimonium,  
& observantiae Tesseram.*

D. D.

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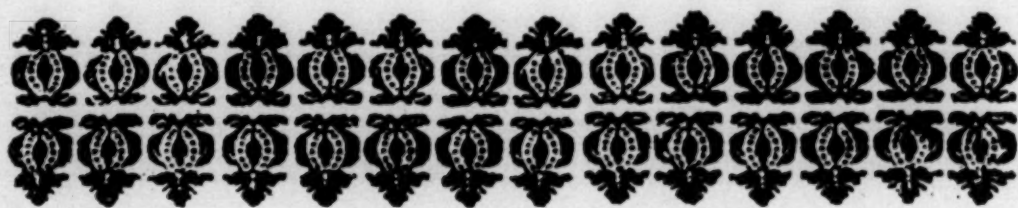
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TO

The Reverend, and Learned,  
Mr. Stephen Marshall, Mr.  
Richard Baxter, Mr. Thomas Blake,  
Mr. Thomas Cobbet, and other the  
surviving Patrons of the antiently Or-  
thodox, and eminently-usefull Do-  
ctrine, and practise of *Infant-Baptism*.

Reverend and learned Fa-  
thers, and Bretheren.



Have for some late years  
(to my great grief) found  
the experience of this  
Truth, [That vulgar  
bearers, and readers of con-  
troversies in Religion, are  
like Larks, and other  
Birds in a dark night, which  
are so amazed with the light, and the low-bell,  
that they sit still hearkning and gazing; till the



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*net be cast over them; ]* And it is the policy of Satan, who makes it his design to catch Souls, to keep up those publick contests for this very purpose, that so he may (especially in this dark night of Church-confusion, wherein we are) puzzle, and confound the minds of ordinary Christians, and hold them in suspence, as to the practise of those things, which he knows most eminently useful to the promoting of *practical godliness*, till he take them unawares in some net or other; for he is not to learn that it is a considerable advantage to his main design, (*the overthrowing of their faith, and undoing their souls*) if he can but hinder them for some time from the use of those means, which he knows are so great enemies to his Kingdom.

Thence it is, that the hottest disputes of this Age (which for *practical godliness* was once likely to have gotten the start of any that went before it, since the *first primitive* dayes) the hottest and most eager disputes have been about, or against *Ordinances*, the constant and standing exercises *thereof*, and the *staple commodity* from which the livelyhood, and subsistence *thereof* is maintained. You cannot but see as well, and better then I, that when an Ordinance comes to be *disputed* either *Thetically*, or *Hypothetically*, it is commonly *neglected* or *sleightly attented*, by the generality of people; and lies between them like a *controverted estate*, concerning which some thing is done to maintain the *suite*, but little to manure, and improve the *Land*. Men think it a sufficient plea for their sinfull neglects in such cases, *That it is a disputable*

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table thing, and till all be agreed upon the point, they hope they may be allowed to sit still and look on, and then engage when they see what side will prevaile. Thus disputes about the Ministry, have made the wayes of Zion mourn, for the fewness of those that come to the solemn Assemblies: the contests about the Sabbath, have turned it (in the esteem of most people) to a meer idle day, wherein the State gives them liberty to shut up shops, and sit by the fire, or tiddle in the Alehouse, or walk in the fields: so concerning singing of Psalmes, and the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, you know better then I can tell you, how many sinfully suspend their practise upon occasion of the controversies raised concerning them. Another mischief I observe in these times of dispute is, that among those that by occasion of the controversies are any time conscientiously puzzled, it is apparently seen, that they know no medium betweene *hesitation*, or scrupling about an Ordinance, (though but in a circumstance) and the renouncing it altogether; so that the very beginning of their scruples, is a supersedeas to their practise.

This is (generally) the case of the Ordinance of Baptisme. The late unhappy disputes about it, have (we be to them by whom that offence cometh) made men of ordinary capacities, either to look upon it as a litigious thing, and so lay it aside altogether, as the Seckers and Familists; or to practise it as a matter of indifferency, without that due respect to it, which belongs to an Ordinance of God, as most moral and ignorant



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people do ; or else lastly , (at least for some time) to *suspend the practise of it* , as abundance of *unsettled hearers* in every part of the Land.

As for the *Infant application* of it , I perswade my self that the *little use* of it which hath been generally known , hath bin a main motive to divers to renounce it altogether , and to others ( through the just judgment of God ) to blaspheme it. People have had it commonly buzzed in their ears ; that seeing the *Infant Subjects of that administration* , are incapable of understanding it , and making present actual improvement of it , there is little reason to retain the practise of that , which seems so barren , and unprofitable.

But *holy men* , who have made it their study to dive into *the nature and use of all Ordinances* , and to work upon their owne hearts by them , have ( for many ages no doubt ) drawn abundance of sanctifying influence from it , and the *principles and grounds* upon which it hath been administred ; and those of *this Age* , who have had the holy wisdom to turn matters of *dispute* into *practise* ; have been able to say , by their experience , ( in a manner ) as the man that was *born blind* , in the dispute between him and the Pharisees , *Joh. 9.* concerning Christ , *It is a marvellous thing that ye know not from whence he is , and yet he hath opened mine eyes .* vers. 30. So they wonder , that ever it should enter into a dispute , *Whether Infant-Baptisme be of God , or no ?* seeing it hath been ( by the sanctifying influence of the *Spirit of God* ) a conduit of abundance of gracious supplies to them ,

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them, for which they have had cause to bless God the longest day of their lives. And the very experience of this, (had your selves, and such as you (learned and laborious searchers of the Scripture, and those to whom this contro- versie owes much for your endeavor therein) said lesse for it then you have) is no small encouragement to them to own and value it; seeing it cannot easily enter into their hearts, that God should convey *sanctifying influences*, for so many years, by a *mistaken and misapplied Ordinance*, especially when the main efficacy of that Ordinance, in order to the mentioned effects, depends upon *that very circumstance of age* wherein it is charged to be *misapplied*: For though it may (in some cases) be granted, [*That an Ordinance administred with some considerable circumstantial irregularities, may sanctifie*;] yet that those *irregularities themselves*, should be the *channels of sanctifying Grace*, is not easily imaginable. Now this is the case of *Infant-baptisme*. Many holy men, of many Ages, have found their hearts warmed, and quickened in the exercise of *Faith, Repen- tance, Love, Thankfulness*, restrained from *sin*, excited to *duty*, by the consideration (not only of *Baptism* and the personal Covenant therein sealed, but also) of *Baptisme* under the circumstance of *Infant administration*, and the *Covenant of Ancestors*, the foundation of that Administration. Nay more, how often hath Gods engagement in *Infant-Baptism*, and the *hereditary Covenant of believers*, been pleaded (with success) and spread before the Lord, by  
godly



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godly Persons, Ministers, Parents, and others, on the behalf of themselves and theirs; which prayers (surely) seeing they were assisted in them by the Holy Spirit, and eminently answered by God, it is hard to imagine, that they should be founded in a lye? And indeed, that the *Spirit of Truth* should dictate, and the *God of Truth* answer those prayers, which are offered up on so grossely mistaken grounds as those of *wilworship*, (the crime generally charged upon *Infant-Baptism*) seems most absurd, and (in my judgement) approacheth somewhat neerer to *blasphemy*. For the truth of this, (as to matter of experience) I make no question, but thousands of steady Christians can second mine owne (who am the weakest of many of my Brethren, both Ministers and other Christians) and therefore I doubt not, but *that* will keep them up-right in the present controverſie, though the *Scriptures*. upon which their practice is grounded, should be a thousand times more perplexed, and entangled by the sophistry of their Adversaries.

In the mean time, (however) they cannot but take it wery ill, that the wayes in which they have, and do dayly, find so much of God, should be (not only *disputed*, but) *railed down*, by men, who pretend to so much *Christian moderation*, as some of the Antagonists do. That I mention not the *sooty* and *smutty* names of *Blackrood* and *Collyer*, and others, who have very much gone beyond their fellows in this way; divers sober men do not take it for any very good evidence of that full satisfaction which

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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

which Mr. Tombes pretends to give in his last *Review* of your writings, that he casts so much of this dirt in the faces of those men, and that practice, which surely, will shew their faces in an humble *Appeale* to the Lord Jesus, the King of the Church and Lord of all Ordinances, as farre forth, as he, or those of his way; yea, or as his way it self, dare do. I give you here a *Catalogue* of some straynes of his language in this kinde, gathered out of that *Review*, wherein yet there is a great deal more. *Infant-watering* p. 50. *the superstitious opinion and prophane practise of Infant-Baptism, or rather (as it is now used) sprinkling and perfusion*, pag. 104. *Who make Infants Disciples by an imaginary covenant, and their parents profession*, pag. 150. *In common speech (arising from the fond conceit, as if Baby-sprinkling made them Christians) Infants are called Christians. And, our Infants are the children of Christians, yet not themselves (Christians, till they believe in Christ*, pag. 205. *Baby-Baptism*, pag. 214. *Prophane Infant-sprinkling*. pag. 240. *So gross an abuse as Infant-Baptism is*, pag. 245. *That which is called by Pædo-Baptists in their nonsense or proper gibberish, the outward Covenant*, pag. 253. *They rashly and prophanely Baptize them that they have no knowledge of, that of them is the Kingdom of glory*, pag. 264. *Wrangling Baby-sprinklers*, pag. 276.

To all which I may adde that heavy *censure*, which he passeth, with a full mouth; upon Pædo-Baptists, Ministers, and People; that they are all guilty of *injudiciousness, or sloathfulness*



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fulness in searching after the Truth, or prejudice, or adhering to mens sayings out of reverence to their persons, or function, or some such like evil quality. And this he passeth, not upon the profaner and looser sort, but even those of them who are of tender consciences. Had Mr. Tombes his conscience been a little more tender in this, and the rest of his high rauntings against the Persons, and Doctrine of his Adversaries in this point, it had been nothing to the disparagement of his person or cause. *Reproaches, and censures may well be forborn, on the side of Truth, which needs not tali auxilio vel defensoribus istis.*

I hope Mr. Tombes will not take it ill, that I have minded him of those out-leaps of his Pen, nor interpret it a *designe to possesse people against him; and an indirect taking of advantages* to that purpose (as he doth unjustly charge me in his first Section of the said Booke, upon occasion of my publication of his coming off at the *Act at Oxford 1652.* in his declining a Dispute between himselfe, and others, who upon a publique vapour of his in the *Divinity-School* (which afterwards he recalled at the *Deane of Christ-Church* his lodgings) had taken up the Gauntlet against him, upon the Question of Infant-Baptisme; a thing which (I professe) I did only to stop the current of a report spread farre and neare throughout the Nation (by more *indirect courses* of some of his well-willers) that Mr. Tombes had challenged the whole University, and no man dared to take him up: so that what I did therein, was onely a *direct course* to dispossesse people of prejudice, *indirectly*

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*directly* endeavoured to be suggested to them, against our Doctrine and Practice, rather than an *indirect course* to blast him and his; and therefore I barely related the matter of fact to a friend in *London*, who sent it to the *publique Intelligence*, to insert it in his News. And as concerning any *misrelation*, or partiall narration; Mr. *Tombes* himselfe, (to my best knowledge) doth not so much as charge me, in his Letter printed a fortnight after in answer thereunto: onely he casts some reflections of scorne upon me and some others; his intended Antagonists then, and some unchristian censures, for which I leave Him to account with him, who will one day take an account of *hard speeches*) I say, I hope, he will not tax me with a like crime in transcribing this Catalogue of his harsh, and unfavoury expressions: which I have done that I might let him see, how large an *Index expurgatorius*, his polemicall Writings will need, when God shall call him to account, for reviling and reproaching the *foot-steps of his Anointed*, who walke in the good old way of *Pædo-Baptisme*, the High-way of Gods Saints in former Ages, and a *way of holinesse*, in the experience of most of those that upon due consideration walk in it.

But I forbear farther enlargements upon so unwelcome an Argument, leaving him to your learned Pennes, to be dealt withall in a more effectually conviction then I dare (considering my small proportion of abilities) to undertake. In the meane while, I have made bold to dedicate this *short Dialogue* to your *Reverend Names*; partly,



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partly, by way of *acknowledgment* of the great service that you have already done in this Cause; partly, by way of *supplement* of a necessary Appendix thereunto, without: which all Disputes in that kinde must needs faile of ther principall end; and partly, ( in the last place ) by way of *patronage*, being resolved to turne over all Adversaries, who shall, in any sort, appeare against the *polemicall part* of the Truth delivered herein, to you the *great Champions in this controversie*: but if any thing shall rationally and moderately be urged by any one, to the prejudice of the *practicall part*, which I principally undertake, (what I have said of the other, being onely by a way of *Preface* and *Introduction* thereunto) I promise faithfully, if so slender a piece may be honoured with a *Second Edition*, to take it up, and answer it in the body of the Discourse, where it shall most properly fall in, without *personall contesting* with any man, though I bee never so much *provoked* thereunto, as one that seeks not *Victory* but *Truth*.

*One thing* more I have to say to you, and *but one*, at present; and that is, to intreat you, if you please so farre to favour me, to give me your *private judgement* of this piece, and such animadversions, castigations, or additions, as you shall think fit to make to the whole or any part thereof; that if I have occasion to appeare any more upon the Stage in this Cause, I may be the better furnished to render so usefull a subject more serviceable to the publick good, to the which it is intended. This I take no shame to begge (even in print) because I know such a taske

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

as this ( being hitherto undertaken by no other  
that I have heard of ) will need the concurrence  
of more abilities to performe it, as the worth and  
weight of it requires, then the single furniture  
of him, who is,

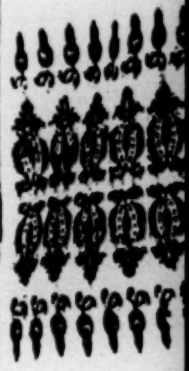
*(Reverend Sirs,)*

*Your weake, but willing  
and (I hope) single-  
hearted, fellow-labourer  
in the work of our Lord.*

From my  
Study in  
Reading,  
November  
4. 1654.

S I M O N F O R D.



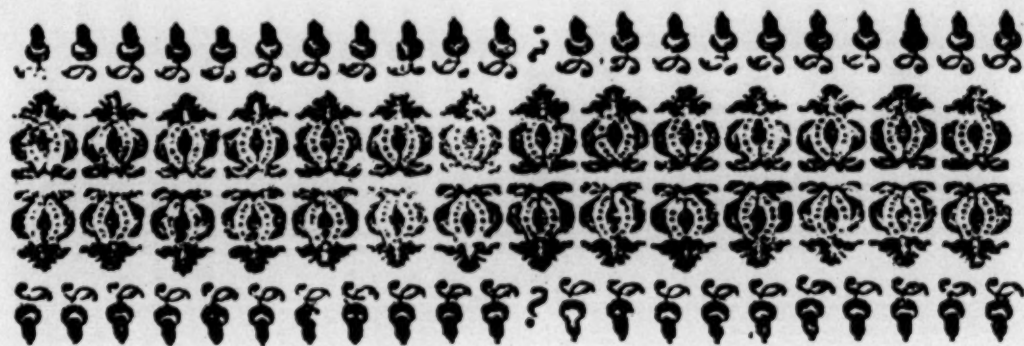


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The reason why  
cause I know man



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Epistle to the *Reader* of this  
Treatise, especially, of my  
owne Flock, in Rea-  
ding in *Berk-shire*.

CHRISTIAN READER :



*Adresse my selfe to thee  
in the threshold of this  
Treatise, with a twofold  
request, before thou spend  
thy censure upon it. The  
one is, that thou read,  
and the other is, that thou  
pray over it. Whatever  
thy judgment be, I hope it will not deny me herein,  
did it concerne thee lesse, then (in my apprehen-  
sion) this do:h.*

*The reason why I desire the first of these, is be-  
cause I know many good books suffer under the un-  
just*



## The Authors Epistle

just sentence of prejudice, and disaffection, before they are read. It being motive enough to most engaged persons, on all hands, to condemne a booke, that its Title page speakes not on their side: And the second, I have this farther reason to beg at thy hands; because I know an Unpraying Spirit is very unfit to adventure upon the study of any Practicall subject whatsoever. Practicall Truths alwayes carry some thing in them which goes against the graine of an heart, not taught of God, and managed by his holy Spirit.

If I can but obtaine these two things of thee, I doubt not my successe in this weake attempt towards thy satisfaction and settlement, in the practise and improvement of the Ordinance herein treated of.

And next, (supposing that I have obtained my twofold request) I shall only adde a twofold advertisement to thee concerning the following Treatise.

First, That I compose it in a Dialogue-way for two reasons,

(1.) That I might sute it to the capacities of such as are not able to make so profitable an use of books composed in a Method of Art, as of those that are framed in a Method of Discourse.

(2.) Because I see others who have gone before me in practicall discourses, have laboured in this way with abundant successe upon the ordinary sort of readers.

Secondly, that (the subject in the maine intent thereof being practicall) I have not beene so precisely carefull of expressions, as in a close Controversie, I would have beene. And therefore

## To the Reader.

fore if thou be one that (in point of censoriousnesse) wilt play at a small game rather then sit out, I have my plea ready. I intended to direct the Consciencious, not to please the Criticall Reader. I am sure those that are of the true Eagle-breed of Christians, that flie highest in communion with God, and the exercise of practicall godnesse will not stoope to catch flies.

The Lord blesse this poor labour of mine unto thee for good, that thou maist hence know what use to make of an Ordinance, which partly through Ignorance, and partly through want of consideration, most Christians doe too much profane; and thereby have, and doe still provoke the Lord to suffer it to be called in Question, and in divers places, laid aside altogether. It being just with God to continue Ordinances no longer among a people, then they use them as Ordinances.

And (lastly) if thou receive any confirmation, satisfaction, excitation, or any other kinde of holy improvement hereby, let me intreate thee to put up one prayer, for the improving and sanctifying of the poor abilities of him, who is

One of the meanest Servants of Christ, in the work of the Gospel,

S I M O N F O R D.

From my  
Study in  
Reading,  
November  
4. 1654



A Preface  
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A Preface, to the Reader,  
concerning the usefulnesse  
of these two Treatises.



HE vindication of  
Infant-baptisme hath  
been the worke of  
many, since the time  
that in so publique a  
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posed; and that their labour through  
grace, hath not been in vaine, the e-  
vent doth demonstrate. That way (not-  
withstanding the greatest of advantages  
that it hath found) having gained no  
considerable ground among us. The  
greatest successe that in any place it hath  
had, for the most part hath been upon the  
first apperance, and Novelty with these  
hath most taken, as is plain by their  
easy entrance and speedy revolt, as soone  
\* 3 as any



## A Preface, to the Reader.

as any tenent more new bath shewed it selfe. Anti-pædo-baptists almost every where turning Anti-baptists, helping themselves against that charge, with a distinction of water and spirit-baptisme, being possess'd of the one (as they say they are) they tell us, there is no use of the other: and when the Apostle reasons from the one to the other, Act. 10. 49. from Spirit-baptisme to water-baptisme, these argue from the one against the other. So that, so far as I have experience or intelligence, the number of Re-baptists is mightily shaken, and of those that held to that principle, they are very rare, that take not up with it, the utter denyall of the traduction of any original sin, together with the whole body of Pelagianisme. The learned hand with whom I and others have had more especially to deale, stands not (I confesse) herein chargeable. He hath hitherto sufficiently, if not over  
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## A Preface, to the Reader.

and above, shewed himselfe opposite to that way; but how inconsiderable his party is, to the opposite side, which the shakers sieve hath left, is very manifest. It is hardly believed by the most, that there is a man of that party, that is not against originall sin, for the freedom of will, respectiue to the most spirituall objects &c. A righteous thing with God, to diuide them among themselvs, that haue diuided themselves from all the churches of the saints, not onely in this opinion (which some may iudge of it selfe inconsiderable) but in all ways of Church-Communion. Judging us to be (as they doe) unbaptised persons, it necessarily follows, that as to any Church-priviledge, we goe not above heathens. Such is their heathenous censure of the Churches of Christ Jesus. In this worke our Reverend Author hath prayse-worthily appeared, being of the last, he hath had indeed the advantage of the labours

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## A Preface, to the Reader.

bours of all that have gone before him: but that it may appeare that he rather deserves the reputation of a leader, then a follower, in that which others have travailed least, he hath appeared most, which is, the practicall use of this ordinance receiued in infancy. Others have not been silent, as may be seene in their works: but of all that I have seene he is the most ample and full, no other in this holding any comparison, so that the promise in the frontispiece is made good with much advantage. Here, if the fault be not thine owne, thou mayst reap a triple benefit. (1.) Satisfying replies to their cavills that cry out of Infant-baptisme (as some are apt to doe) as vain, childish and uselesse. It is more then a wonder, that when men know that God chose that age to be the time of initiation of his owne people, that any should dare to charge it upon that bare account, to be without that profit.

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## A Preface, to the Reader.

(2.) Usefull helps for the way of profiting, if thy heart be set to get profit. Here thou mayst learne, how faith on this account may be strengthened, repentance in the severall parts of it promoted, the fervor of love towards God kindled, the hatred of sin more deeply rooted; to goe over the whole, were to transcribe the work; And all of this, with that acutenesse of judgement, elegancy of phrase, variety and plainnesse of expression, that delight may lead thee on to profit. (3.) In the 2d part, which now first appears in publique, thou hast over and above given in to thy hands, a vindication of this Infant-priviledge in that latitude, in which it hath happily come to our hands, and all ages of the Church have enjoyed. When mens wits have spoke what they can devise; our curtolling of it will be found the way to lose it. There is not an Argument of strength to let in, those that



## A Preface, to the Reader.

that men would be willing to admit, but it will take in those with them, that some would refuse. That of covenant-holinesse divolved from Ancestors, is our bottom, (which Anti-pædo-baptists therefore eagerly strive to beat downe with the Jesuits Arguments,) and this is an holinesse of relation to, or separation for God, distinguished from that which is inherent, or by qualification: and all Infants borne in the Church (as the Apostle witnesseth) are in this sense holy. It hath been deservedly judged an Argument of force to evince Infants Church-membership and baptisme, that they were once undoubtedly Church members, and it no where appearing that ever they were disfranchised, therefore they are still Church-members: and sure it is, that at that time, when they were Church-members, so explicitly owned, it was in that latitude for which our Author doth contend, and hath hitherto been the pra-

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## A Preface, to the Reader.

*Etise of the Churches.* If any should set upon a designe, to undoe all that by commission from Christ in many nations of the world is happily done, there could not (I believe) a more ready way be found then this to effect it; though those that take it in hand, are far from any such designe in it. If a man would goe about to undisciple nations, and take off the Kingdoms of the world, that they should be no longer the Lords or his Christs, what fayrer way could be found, then to take them off piecemeal and by parcells, here a family and there a family, in some congregations, almost all the families? if this way were held, how soone would it be, that in England we should have few baptized families? How ordinarily do the issue of truly pious persons prove exorbitant in their lives? If such families shall now be struck out of the list of Christians, the whole race remains then extinct, and must



## A Preface, to the Reader.

must be lookt upon as Heathens, for such are all unbaptized ones, that want all right to baptisme. Let us looke into Judah, a Church where salvation was, and as it was with the royall familye there, we need not doubt, but that it also was with other familyes: David and Solomon, good men, had Rehoboam, and Abijam succeeding on the throne, and degenerating from their ways: if their posterity had now been blotted out, that family might have been reckoned with those of Ishmael and E-liau, and the Church had never had an Afa, or Jehoshaphat of that race. Many that followed these were worse then those that went before them, as Jehoram, Ahaziah, Jehoash, and Amaziah, especially in ther later times. If the line had now been razed out, the Church had wanted an Hezekiah, and a Josiah. Who is there that can say, that if this rigour had been used respectiue to their an-

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to the Reader.

## A Preface, to the Reader.

ancestors, themselves had ever been amongst those that are called by the name of Christian. For ever blessed be God that it hath been by providence ordered otherwise. Learned Mr. Baxter in his Treatise of Infants Church membership and Baptisme, cap 13. grounding an argument for Infants Church membership on those words Revel. 11. 15. the Kingdomes of this world are become the Kingdomes of our Lord and his Christ, shews his just indignation against those that will understand it of some part only of Kingdomes, that so they may exclude infants, and being meant (as it needs must be) of whole Kingdomes, we cannot exclude any infants, and we shall as soone find a Kingdome without Infants, as a Kingdome made up only of men justifyingly and savingly believers. Some pious persons professedly declare that they dare not baptise an Infant upon a dogmaticall



## A Preface, to the Reader.

ticall faith in the parents, and I cannot but professe that being fairly called to it, I should tremble at the guilt of refusing it. I should as soone be brought to strip them of their houses, or Inheritances divoiced upon them from such parents, to take the bread out of their mouths, as to debar them of this their Birth-privilege, which I think also is the thoughts of many of our seemingly dissenting brethren, in that they are so well content, that others should doe it in their stead, some of them exchanging with their brethren for that purpose, which speaks their judgement not to be averse from it. When God of his great long suffering continues his Kingdome with these, and suffers such plants to have a standing in his vinyard, who am I, that I should take order otherwise? But I hold thee over long from the work it selfe where thou mayst find more full satisfaction. As for such things that he disputes as possible

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## A Preface, to the Reader.

sible, or at most as probable, as he leaves it, so do I, to the liberty of thy judgement: For the Catechisme of which the Printer speaks, I never saw it, but being extracted out of this worke, and speaking principally to the practicall use of Infant-Baptisme, I wish that no family wanted it. The Lord keepe us from dividing principles, that we may follow the truth in love, and grow up in all things in Christ, which is the prayer and through Gods grace shall be the endeavour of him who is,

An unfeigned wellwisher  
of the Churches peace  
and Edification,

T O M A S B L A K E.

From my  
study in  
Tamworth  
Octob. 22  
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## D I A L O G U E

Concerning  
*The Practical use of*  
INFANT-BAPTISM.

In this Dialogue  
the parties are,

*Pædobaptists*, An Orthodox Minister, practising Infant-Baptism.  
*Asteriskus*, A wavering hearer, unsettled in the point in hand.

*Pædobaptista.*

N Eighbour *Asteriscus*, I am glad to meet you so opportunely, where I may have the advantage of some private discourse with you; and the rather, because by your seldomer frequenting the publick Ordinances then formerly, I have some cause to feare you may have met with some seducer or other, and are either already fallen or endangered to fall from your former stedfastnesse.

*Astiricus.* Indeed Sir, I have the more for-  
born your Congregation of late, because I find  
you are much altered in your way of preaching,  
a great part of your Sermons being made up of  
invectives against honest men that differ from  
you in opinion, whereas it is the duty of a Mi-  
nister of the Gospel to preach up love and cha-  
rity, and not division and dissention.

B

But



Pædo.

But Neighbour, supposing that I or any other Minister of the Gospel, do not discharge *our* duty in every particular as we ought; yet you are not thereby excused from doing *yours*. And yet (for my part) my conscience beareth me witness that though I have (according to my duty) spoken sharply of Seducers, and set them out in their colours, *that their folly may be made known to all men*: yet I have upon all occasions been exceeding tender to those wel-meaning people who are led away by them, according to the Apostles rule, *putting a difference*. But I pray you (Neighbour) tell me what honest men they are whose cause you thus plead, that I may be able to give you a more particular account of my carriage towards them, and the reasons thereof for your fuller satisfaction.

Judg. 23

After.

Truly Sir, the men I plead for, are those they call *Anabaptists*, divers of whom I know, who are (I hope) godly men, and such as differ from you in nothing but the point of *Infant-Baptism*, and that in so small a matter, that (me thinks) it might be reconciled without much adoe, at least so far as that you might *love one another as brethren*.

Pædo.

Indeed Neighbour, could you shew me any of that profession who have given sufficient proof of their real godlinesse, differing only about the *Subject of Baptism* and peaceably waiting upon God in his Ordinances for satisfaction of their doubts, without endeavouring to seduce others, (which is the practise of godly and conscientious dissenters, from the publick received Doctrine and customes of the Church) I should

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give them the *right hand of fellowship*, and love them with all my heart as Brethren, putting no difference in my affection and deportment, between them, and those of mine own judgment and profession. But you cannot be ignorant (Neighbour) how far different this Character is from those of that way, that we in our parts have to deal withal; that they are (for the most part) ignorant of the grounds of Religion, loose in their principles and lives, and there are very few of them who have given any sufficient evidence of any practical godlinesse, and (of those few that have) very few of them stop at the point of *Anabaptism* but withal run into *Aminian*, *Familistical* and *Socinian* errors; withal defying the publick Ordinances, and railing at the Ministry which (if they were ever soundly converted) begot them to Christ; and lastly, there is scarce one of them tainted this way, but makes himself by and by an active instrument to seduce as many as he can. Now such must be rebuked *sharply*; and though formerly they were accounted godly men, yet till they return from those principles and practises, which are so inconsistent with godlinesse, they are not to be so high in our thoughts, as till they discovered those corruptions, they were, and ought to be. But I pray you neighbour, how long have you been an Advocate for them?

Truly Mr. *Pedobaptist*, not long, nor am I now engaged to take their part, by any relation I have to them as a Member of their Society; but I have been sometimes in the company of some of them, where I have heard them thus

After.



plead, and profess they love you with all their hearts, and wonder you should be so bitter against them.

*Pado.*

And for my part, neighbor, I wonder as much at them, how they can think I should not publicly preach against them, who take all occasions to seduce my flock, and make use of all advantages to render my Person and Doctrine odious to my hearers. And as for the love they bear to me, I pray God I may never have need to make trial of it; but if I had, I fear it would prove a *Munster-love*, where that party pretended no less love, till they got power into their hands, and then (in their singular love) they cut the throats of as many as openly durst profess to differ from them. And truly neighbour, though they speak fair to you, whom they hope to make a Profelyte, yet compare but their *professions of love* with their *practises*, you will not wonder at me if I will hardly believe them: for you do not see with what malice, and bitternesse they do in other companies rail at, revile, and reproach me and (especially when they had hopes of encouragement from men in power) how often they have uttered threatening speeches, and how many publick insclencies and affronts they have offered me, even in mine own Congregation; and these cannot be arguments of any great love. But to leave that discourse, and them to the recovery of a better mind in Gods time, I pray you friend, have they at no time endeavoured to instil their principles into you? which I suspect, because I observe you have had a child lately, and I perceive you make no haste to baptize it.

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I cannot deny(Sir) but I have had several discourses with them concerning infant-Baptism, and by them I am rendred somewhat more unsatisfied in the point then formerly ; which hath occasioned that delaying the Baptism of my Child which you speak of.

After.

But neighbour, if Baptism be(as it is) an Ordinance of God to be applyed to Infants of believing Parents, then it is not safe to delay it upon any pretence whatsoever. For although God be not bound to his Ordinance so, as to give grace to all Elect children, at the instant of Baptism, yet (seeing Sacraments are not only bare signes and seals of the Covenant, but conduits of the grace of the Covenant, when and as God is pleased to dispence it) I know not why that Sacrament to some Elect children, I mean those that dye in infancy, may not be indeed the *laver of regeneration*, and they receive the *grace* of Baptism with the *signe*. For if no person can enter into the Kingdome of Heaven, except his person be justified, and his nature sanctified, and God useth to dispense these graces in some Ordinance or other, seeing such Infants live not to be capable of any other Ordinance, why should I not believe them regenerated in Baptism? And if so, a Parent cannot answer the neglect of any means regularly to be had, wherein grace may be conveyed into them. Nay, were there no more in the matter but this, that I deny God the *Title* which by the Covenant he hath to my seed, and that as soon as they are mine, I should fear God would be as angry with *me* as he was with *Moses*, for delaying to circumcise his

Pauc.



Exod. 4. 24 Childe, and I might be in as much danger as he, when *the Angel of the Lord met him in the way and sought to kill him.*

*After.* It seems then, Sir, you think it a *matter of necessity* to Baptize Children, I ever thought it an *indifferent thing*, that being a custome received amongst us, it might be done rather then give offence.

*Pado.* I am sorry (neighbour) that ever you presented a Child to Baptism upon such grounds. Indeed I do, and you ought to look upon Baptism as an *Ordinance of God, signifying and sealing pardon of sins, and sanctification of nature to your childe, by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, engrafting him into the Church, or visible body of Christ, and engaging him to be the Lords;* And upon the account of a duty, so it is necessary that as soone as conveniently you may get a publick Congregation (for till such a time. I think there is no necessity of calling for a Minister to do it in private, for any weakness of the Infant or any other reason, although for the perverseness of our people who have made it a custome, & are loath to leave it, we are fain to condescend to them herein) you do in the face of all his people, with the solemn conjunction of their prayers, give up your Child to God in this way.

*After.* And so I should, Sir, to morrow next, if I apprehend it as you do; but I am now stumbled at the *lawfulness* of it, so far am I from believing its *necessity* in the way of a duty.

*Pado.* That Baptism is an Ordinance to which all those are to be admitted who are capable to receive it, I hope you will grant; and therefore if  
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your Infant be capable of receiving Baptism, I think you will grant it also a duty to present it thereunto; for it is a sin to deny any Ordinance to any to whom it belongs.

Yes, Sir, I shall grant you that, if you can but make it appear to me *that Infants are capable subjects of Baptism.*

After.

Well then, I shall endeavour to satisfy you therein in a few words; I will only ask you a Question or two, to which I desire a plain and positive answer from you: the first is,

Pado.

Where think you the hinderance lies, whether *on God's part*, in not admitting Infants to that Ordinance: or *on the child's part*, as being not capable to receive it, by reason of his want of understanding, &c.

Quest.

On both.

First, then, *on God's part*, I ask you further.

After.

Seeing the *Covenant is the principal part of a Sacrament* (that being the *substance*, and the Sacraments but the *signes* or *seals* annexed to it) *do you think Infants of believing parents are in Covenant with God or no?*

Pado.

Quest.

I know not.

After.

But once they were so, were they not? did not God say to *Abraham, I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed in their generations*, and that in infancy at *eight dayes old*; and if so, when did God turn out the seed of such parents out of Covenant? when did God alter the Covenant of Grace, and in stead of, *I will be the God of believers, and their seed*, say, *I will (henceforward) be the God of believers onely, not of their seed.*

Pado.

Gen. 17.

I confess I know not, nor ever heard of such an

After.



alteration in the Covenant : but Sir, was not this Covenant made with the *Jewes* only ?

*Pado.*

Yes, but so as that it extended to the *Gentiles* too, when they were taken into the Church ; an example whereof God gave even then in taking *Abrahams Servants* and their children into Covenant with him, & afterwards in admitting converted Heathens into the Jewish Church, even to Christs time, with their children in their arms: Besides that the *Apostle Peter* speaking concerning the Covenant of Grace, tells converted Christians, both of Jewes and Gentiles, That the *promise belongs to them and their children* Act. 2. 39. And the *Apostle Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that their *seed* (if one of the parents be a believer) *is holy*, that is, to God by Covenant, (not only *legitimate* or no *bastards*, for so they were not before, but born in lawful Matrimony, when both parents were Heathens) and the *Galatians*, that the  *blessing of Abraham came upon the Gentiles by faith* ; and the *Ephesians*, that the *Gentiles are coheirs with the Jewes in the same promise*, that is, the same Covenant, *Eph. 3. 6.*

Gal. 3. 14.

*After.*

But suppose all this, that the Covenant still holds concerning them, yet God having nowhere said they ought to have the seal of the Covenant administered ; this will not warrant their Baptism.

*Pado.*

Nay, but friend, if God admit children in Infancy into Covenant, and will not *seal* that Covenant to them, what an aspersion do we lay upon him ? An honest man will give his *seal*, if required, where he will give his *word*. Besides, if God gives children in Infancy the *substance*, the *deed*

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De. a it self, will he deny them a *formality*, a *circumstance*, the sealing of it? Nay, may not I challenge what-ever *assurance* may be given me for quiet possession, from him that makes over a *Dreed* or *Writing* to me, and that in point of common equity? Besides, considering that God never parted these two, the Covenant and the Seal in any age, but admitted to the one by virtue of the other; and lastly, that any visible evidence of an interest in the Covenant is the ground upon which the Seals are administred: as in the case of those Converts, *Act. 10.47. Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we.* The evidence that they gave that they had received the Holy Ghost shewed them to be in Covenant, seeing God did not bestow those gifts upon any persons out of the Church, and there-upon the Apostle infers undeniably, that they had right to the Seal, because they had a visible Character of Covenanters upon them.

Yea, but those persons gave testimony in their own persons by outward profession. Infants cannot, and so we have not the same ground to say, that they have *received the Holy Ghost*.

The *Holy Ghost* there spoken of is not the *satisfying grace of the Holy Ghost*, for the Church could not be assured of that. But the *extraordinary gifts* that the Holy Ghost then used to pour out upon Converts, which (though they were not required necessarily to be found in all that were baptized, yet) where they were found, they were an outward testimony that God had actually admitted such into the Church, and so they were

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After.

Pado.



were to be baptized and solemnly admitted by his Ministers. Now if God tell us himself that Infants of believing Parents are within the Covenant, & by consequence within the Church, is not that as sufficient, nay a more sufficient ground for us to proceed upon, then the *visible profession* of any man, or any extraordinary gifts, which have no necessary connection with holiness?

*After.*

But why then do you not admit such Infants to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper?

*Pado.*

Because God requires a *particular qualification* to that Ordinance, which Infants are not capable of, to wit, the exercise of actual grace in *examination, discerning the Lords Body, and remembering the death of Christ*. Besides, the different nature of the Sacraments hints unto us a special difference in this case: for the Sacrament of Baptism being a Sacrament of *Regeneration*, and so of *admission into the Church*, may admit Infants (who are capable of that grace, else dying Infants cannot be saved: ) But the other Sacrament being a Sacrament of *improvement & spiritual growth in Christ*, requires som standing in the Church, and strength of stomach, and so is the proper Ordinance for grown Christians, as the food of grace actually received.

*After.*

I confesse I see a disproportion between the two Sacraments, sufficient to satisfie me in that Objection. But is there any thing more to be pleaded on Gods part for the right of Infants to this Ordinance?

*Pado.*

Yes, and therein also I shall appeal to your own conscience in this question more, *What think you of the eternal condition of Infants?*

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are any of them saved, dying in Infancy?

Surely they are, although I must tell you, some doubt whether the Scripture affirm any thing in that point or no?

After.

I am glad you have not lost all your charity towards them; but your charity must be grounded, else you will quickly be shaken out of that too; and therefore for your confirmation in that point, I will shew you a little Scripture-evidence to settle it upon your spirits.

Pado.

And truly Sir, I shall willingly entertaine it, that I may be able to answer those that endeavour to stumble me herein.

After.

Well then, what think you of *Dauids child*, that dyed the seventh day, either after its birth, or the denunciation of that judgement by *Nathan*, all agree it dyed in infancy: What means *David* when he saith, *I shall go to it, but it shall not return to me?* 2 Sam. 12. 23.

Pado.

It may be he means, *to the place of the dead, the Grave.*

After.

No, surely, he means *the Kingdome of Heaven.*

Pado.

How doth that appeare?

After.

Because *David* comforts himself with this consideration. And it had been a *poor comfort* to *David* to consider that he should one day lie by his child in the *Grave*; but that he hoped for a more comfortable meeting with it after death, which must needs be in the *Kingdome of Heaven*: besides, it would rather have been a great *affliction* to him to think that his child was *dead*, if he had no ground to believe other then that he was *damned*. For we find in the case of *Ab-salom*,

Pado.



*solom.* concerning whose salvation he had cause to doubt, how he mournes and would not be comforted, *chap.* 18.33.

And the Apostle that moderats the mourning of Christian Friends for their dead, *1 Thess.* 4.13. doth it from this principle, that they were *not without hope* of their salvation; which strongly concludes, that the death of friends of whose salvation we have no ground of hope, may deservedly the more afflict us: and by consequence, if *David* were out of hope of his child's salvation, he had little reason to *put off his mourning* upon the death of his child, and had more cause by far to *keep it on*, seeing whilst the child lived, he had cause to believe it in a safer condition. But to leave that, and proceed; what do you think, *did not thousands of the Jews children dye in Infancy?*

*After.*

Yes, no doubt.

*Pado.*

And surely you will not say they were all damned.

*After.*

Possibly they might, for any thing we find written to the contrary.

*Pado.*

Say you so? *Was God in Covenant with them or not?*

*After.*

Yes, he was in Covenant with them, and their seed.

*Pado.*

And have we ground to think that God will break his part of the Covenant with any one, who doth not break with him?

*After.*

No surely, for he is a God that *keepeth promise and Covenant for ever*; & is so far from that, that he keeps Covenant with us, when we deal treacherously and perfidiously with him.

*Pado.*

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we must judg, were not excluded the Kingdom of Heaven, seeing they dyed under the wing of Gods Covenant, which on their part they could not forfeit by any actual sin, and without actual forfeiture we have no warrant to think God annulls his Covenant with any one.

But that Covenant with *Abraham* and his seed, was a covenant of outward things, as some say, viz. to give them the *Land of Canaan*.

But it was a Covenant made with *all his seed*, for upon the account thereof they were all circumcised, and admitted to the *Passover*.

Suppose that, what follows thence?

Yes, this follows, That it was *more then an outward Covenant*, containing the promise of a Temporal *Canaan*; for else those children of *Abraham* that dyed in infancy, and the rest of his posterity, who dyed out of the land of *Canaan*, had had no share in it, and so the Seal to them had confirmed a *meer blank*, or as bad, to wit, *such a deed as they should never be the better for*.

And therefore no doubt the promise of *Canaan* is rather an *addition* to the Covenant, then the *substance* of it; or if of the substance of it, it implies *more* then the Land so called, and must be understood Typically of a spiritual *Canaan*, the Kingdome of Heaven. And so God fulfilled the Covenant to those believers, and elected Infants who enjoyed not the temporal *Canaan*, seeing they enjoyed that *other rest*, which *Jesus*, not *Joshua* brought them to: which is that that the Apostle affirms, *Heb. 3*. And so, the addition of the promise of *Canaan* to the Covenant of *Abraham*, is a firmer argument for me to prove the

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After.

Pado.

After.  
Pado.



the salvation of those Infants dying in Infancy, to whom Temporal *Canaan* was no mercy.

But it is clear, that the substance of the Covenant was Spiritual, a Covenant of Grace, because Circumcision annexed to it as a Seal, signified those Spiritual and saving mercies, *Dent. 30 6. Rom. 4. 11. Col 2. 11, 12.*

*After.*

But what doth that concern our Infants, who are not of *Abrahams* loines?

*Pado.*

Σ

Yes, for by the former argument I have proved the Covenant with *Abraham* and believing Gentiles the same: Besides, can it be imagined that God who gave salvation to Infant-Jews, shall exclude the Infants of the believing Gentiles out of the Kingdome of Glory, who are ten thousand times the number, in all probability? what is there that should make so great a difference, or on what word can we ground the conceit of so great a difference?

*After.*

Well, I suppose this proved sufficiently, that Infants may be saved; but what is that to prove that they may be Baptized?

*Pado.*

Σ

Σ

I have one argument more in this point, and then I will shew you. You find our Saviour Christ affirming no lesse in positive terms. *Mat. 19. 15, 16.* recorded by two other Evangelists also, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdome of heaven.* And it is remarkable, that *Luke* when he relate the same story, to assure us, that they were not capable of actual faith, calls them *βρέφη*, Infants, *Luk 18 15* a word which constantly is used to signifie that tender age, and never applyed to any adult children.

*After.*

But it is said, that *of such is the Kingdome of God;*

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God; not of *these*, but of *such as these*, i.e. say the Adversaries of Infant-Baptism, of those that are meek, humble, &c. like these.

Surely, friend this must needs be a *wretched evasion*; for can any man think that Christ bestows blessings upon any thing meerely upon a bare similitude between Saints and it? why then doth he not bless sheep, doves, serpents, &c. between whom and Saints there is no lesse resemblance? Is the solemn blessing of Christ bestowed upon such slight grounds?

I might possibly have spared much of this labour upon your former concession, but that I was willing to establish your belief in this point upon Scripture-grounds: and therefore I shall now shew you what use I make of that hath been said.

Yea Sir, I expect you should now shew how the concession of *salvation* to Infants, concludes their *right to Baptism*.

Thus, Salvation is not extended by the Scripture beyond the Church; Christ is the *Saviour of his body*, and that only, *Eph. 5.23*. If then Infants be *capable of salvation*, they are *of the body*; and if so, have right to the *Seal of admission*, by which Members are engrafted thereinto, which is Baptism.

Yes, without doubt, if Infants be saved, it follows that they are Members of the *Church invisible*; but Baptism is not administered upon the account of Membership in the *Church invisible*, except it appear also that any of them belong to the *Church visible*.

This I shall undertake therefore, to evince in the

Pado.

After.

Pado.

After.

Pado.



Jude 7.

the next place upon the former grounds : surely you being convinced that Infants are not on *Gods part* excluded from an interest in the Covenant of grace & salvation by it, either extend that *charity to all Infants, or some only*; if to *all Infants*, your charity is no Scriptural charity, because the Scripture affirms all to be born in original sinne, and adds moreover, that divers infants who never committed actual sinne, dyed upon that account everlastingly, for the Apostle tells us so expressly, *Rom. 5. 14.* And as for those that were destroyed in the fire of *Sodom* and its neighbour Cities, the Apostle *Jude* tells us that they all *suffer the vengeance of eternal fire*; and surely many hundreds of them were Infants. If your charity extend to *some Infants only*, I would fain know what ground there is upon which your charity may hope the salvation of *some Infants more then others.* Upon what ground did *David* hope the salvation of *his child*, more then of any child of the cursed *Canaanites*? Upon what ground can any *Christian* expect the same concerning his child, more then concerning the child of a *Turk* or an *Indian*? If there be a rule on which this difference is founded, that rule will make *those Infants* visible Church-Members, and *others* not. For every one concerning whose salvation the Church have present warrantable ground to hope, is by right a Member thereof, seeing the *Church on earth* hath no reason to shut the doors against such, whom it is perswaded God will (they dying in such a condition) admit into *Heaven.*

After.

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ing Charity to Infants, I pray what is it?

There is, and that is, the *parents visible Church-membership*; and *external relation to the Covenant*; for the Covenant (as was before said) admitting parents; admits their seed with them: and by consequence, the seed of those who are in Covenant themselves, are in Covenant upon their account.

Now seeing the Covenant runs only to *Believers and their seed*, and no where to *the seed of professed unbelievers*; we may and must conclude, that the Infant seed of such unbelievers have no hope of salvation, and the seed of professed believers have; and by consequence it follows, that *these* are visible Church-Members upon the former ground, and *those* not so.

Nay, we have as much, if not more ground to acknowledg the Church-membership of such *Infants*, then of *grown Christians*, because our acknowledgment of these depends upon their *own testimony only in a visible profession*, which may be counterfeit. But such Infants are accepted as Church-members upon a *divine Testimony* concerning them and their condition, which in their present infant-state they cannot be liable to any *suspicion of defeating by hypocrisie*. *Simon Magnus* professing, was a *Church-member* and an *Hypocrite*; Infants being by God owned for Church-members, possibly may be *non-elected*, but cannot be *hypocrites*.

I confesse Sir, you say more for the Baptizing of Infants, then I have before heard, and I do not at the present see what may be materially objected; yet is there one thing that sticks with me more then all the rest, and that is *the uselesse-*

*Pado.*

*Aster.*



*ness of this Doctrine, and of this Ordinance so administered, seeing Infants at present can make no use of it; and in my judgement there is no such advantage to be made by them, when they come to years of discretion, of that Baptism which in Infancy they received, as might be made of the same received at years of judgment upon their own personal profession.*

*Pado.*

*Dr. Sam.  
Ward  
Thesis.*

*You then conceive an hinderance on the child's part, but I shall not easily grant you, that Baptism is altogether uselesse unto Infants dying in Infancy; For (besides that divers Divines of special note, do hold the justification of all duly baptized Infants in Baptism, & dying in infancy, and the washing away the guilt of original sin from all Infants so baptized, whether elect or non-elect; which (I confess) I cannot swallow in such a latitude, for divers reasons, which it is beside my present businesse to alledge, and the main of them is, that this Doctrine seems too much to favour Apostacy from grace) you know I have before given you some grounds why I perswade my self, that some Infants, to wit, (such as being elected die in Infancy, are justified and sanctified in the administration of that Ordinance.*

*But not to insist further on that, I shall undertake (by Gods assistance) to shew you, before we part, something more then you desire in this point, viz.*

*That there is much more advantage to be made in order to sanctification, consolation, and several other ways, of the Doctrine and practice of Infant-Baptism, then of that Doctrine and practice that limits Baptism on-*

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ly to personal profession at years of discretion.  
If I prove it more useful, I do with advantage prove it as useful, which is the thing you question.

I grant it is more then I desire, and if you perform this, I shall entirely yeild you the whole question: For (to tell you the truth) my self, and such as I am, being plain and unlearned men, are not so capable of judging of those arguments that are disputed on both sides in this matter: wherefore we rather leave them to be examined by learned men. But that that prevails most with us, is the *uselessness* of that administration, and the foundations upon which it is built; together with the *advantage* which in this particular, we conceive, the contrary principles and practise have in point of benefit; wherefore I pray you proceed in your intendment.

Very willingly I shall, for (although I think it no sufficient Argument to prove a *divine Institution* in any thing, to shew how *useful* it may be; because I know that it is an advantage given to those that shall at any time be willing to innovate; in which cases it is an easie matter for the wit of man to find out some practical use or other of every such invention of their own braines; (and hereof we have had sufficient experience in those who obtruded a fardel of ceremonies upon this Church of late years, and would have screwed them up to a Divine Institution upon such grounds, yet) when any thing in question, as to Divine Institution, hath much countenance from *Scripture*, interpreted by the constant practice of the *best antiquity*, it may

After.

Pado.



be of considerable advantage to turn the scales in a rational mans judgment, that it hath a special use towards the promoting of godliness for the present, & assuring happiness for the future: especially when an *unquestionable Divine Institution* hath appointed formerly a *parallel Ordinance* for the same uses, and those uses are as evidently, without forced consequences, to be made of the Institution *in question*, as ever of that former which is *out of question*, which is the case of *Baptism*, with relation to *Circumcision*, which was instituted by God to signifie the *same things* with Baptism, and was then used for the same ends.

Wherefore I very well like your motion in this particular, and concur with you in your resolution, to leave the *notional part* of this question, and examine the *practical part*, and that for these additional reasons.

1. Because most people *sell* this precious birth-right of theirs, and their Infants, in Gods Covenant, and (by consequence) in Baptism, for as little as *Esau* (who therefore is called *profane Esau* because he sold the Church-privileag of his posterity, not because he sold a meer outward prerogative of being the first-born, for that had at most been but *folly*, or (at most) but a *civil injury* to his posterity, and not in any sense *profaneness*, seeing an heir that sells away his Land of Inheritance, is not therefore to be called *profane*.) I say, many like *Esau*, sell his birth-right, because they knew not what good it would do unto them.

2. Because I perceive the main Art of Seducers, in their snares they lay for plain-meaning people, lyes that way, they seek to prove it *unlawful*,

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*lawful*, because *unuseful*. For it is no hard matter for them to perswade silly people, that Infants being incapable of understanding what is done to them in Baptism, may as well be *without* it as *with* it; seeing all the use they can make of it, is at years of discretion; and if so, were it not better (say they) to defer the *administration* of that till such years, whereof no *use* can be made till then?

3. Because I perceive it is the Devils great policy to turn off the minds of men from the *practical improvement* of their Baptism, by filling of their heads with *notions*, and engaging them in disputes about the *administration* of it; and as he deals in *this*, so in the *other Sacrament*, he hath endeavoured and still endeavours (if possible) to keep men from enjoying of it by such questions; so heretofore, by stirring Disputes about *Altars*, and *Rayles*, and *Gestures* and the *Liturgie* wherein it was administered, and *badness of Ministers* administering; and of late about *fit communicants*, *incapacity of administration* for want of an *established Government* &c. He hath still prevailed with divers, so far as to exclude them from it for divers years together. Now there is no such way to countermine him herein, as by endeavouring to lift up the *practical part* of Sacraments in the minds of men, as high as ever the *controversal part* was.

4. Because I have cause to conceive, that Infant-Baptism being an *engaging Ordinance*, hath (under God) been sanctified to the *preservation* of divers persons in these giddy times in the belief of that *Truth wherein they were Baptized*;



whereas it appeares (on the other side) that the judgment of God hath in no one thing more visibly broken forth against the generality of the renouncers thereof, then *in giving them over to the renouncing those principles and wayes of God to which they were then engaged; God usually punishing partial Apostacy with total and universal back-sliding.*

But to the proofs, and first, (*in general*) no question but God knew, when he had a Church to set up in the world in *Abrahams* time, at *what age* it was fittest, and most beneficial to admit Members into it; yet we see that (although he took the first root *Abraham* when he was a *grown tree* at years of discretion, yet) he chose rather to take the rest of the *plants* when they were *wigs* in their infancy. And doubtless seeing Circumcision was (as Baptism is) an *engaging Ordinance* obliging them to God, and God to them, *he knew* it was of more use for *his* glory and service, and *their* profit and comfort, to ratifie that engagement betimes; and I perswade my self, had it been possible for *Abraham* to have been at his choice; he would have rather been admitted in Infancy as his seed were, for his own profit, upon Arguments which you shall heare anon. And I conceive the like of those men and women that were baptized at years of discretion, that they; had they been alike at liberty, would have made the like choice.

*After.*

Sir, I desire those grounds you speak of, for till I see them, I cannot conceive such a choice probable.

*Pado.*

I will perform your desire, and so proceed to *particular* Arguments.

First

First the grounds & sanctifying power, and in all its later parts.

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And shall grounds of tives, and the to Sanctifica parts, then th and I hope I I like your as you have

First then, in point of *Sanctification*. The grounds & practise of *Infant-Baptism* are more *sanctifying* then those of Baptism received *at riper age*, and more conduce to the acting thereof in all its latitude. *Sanctification* consists of two parts.

{ *Mortification*, or a death unto sin.  
{ *Vivification*, or a life unto God.

Now Sacraments are helpful to Sanctification, either *morally* by motive and engagement to the practice of it, or *physically*, by conveying strength and power thereunto.

As to the latter of these. Sacraments covey Grace from God, as other means do, meerly according to his good pleasure, without any relation to the capacity of the creature: and surely God can work Grace in Infants, as well as in elder persons, by infusion; and therefore herein I see no ground to lay any comparison; so that I shall undertake only the former of these wayes, wherein God sanctifies by Sacraments, *viz.* by way of *motive* or *engagement* on our parts: this I shall shew,

- { 1. From the *grounds* on which its practised.  
{ 2. From the *practise* it self.

And shall plainly evidence to you, that the *grounds* of Infant-Baptism afford strong *motives*, and the *practise* of it stronger *engagements* to Sanctification in both the fore-mentioned parts, then the contrary grounds & practise can, and I hope I proceed according to your mind.

I like your method well, I pray you proceed, as you have begun.

After.



Pado.

Well then neighbour, (to begin with *motives to mortification of sin*.) The ground of Infant-Baptism (as I told you) is Gods Covenant with Ancestors, and theirs with God. Now I ask you, Neighbour, supposing you had an enmity against two persons, the one upon some *late personal injury* received from him, the other not only upon a personal, but upon an *ancient hereditary quarrel*, running in the blood, like that of the *Guelphs and Gibelins*: which of the two were likely to undergoe the heaviest shock of your revenge?

After.

Surely the *hereditary* enemy.

Pado.

Weil then, apply this to the present case, To be born under the *Covenant of Ancestors*, renders sin an *hereditary* enemy, whereas without that consideration, a mans engagement against it is only a *personal* quarrel.

And as for the *practise* of Infant-Baptism, no question it promotes the *mortification of sin*, with far more vigour and activity then the same received at riper years; for that enmity is most mortal which grows up with a man *from the very cradle*: surely, let a mans engagements against sin otherwise be never so strong, yet are they much heightened by continuance; and without all question, the all-wise God fore-saw that it would be no small advantage to this work of *cutting off the body of the sinns of the flesh*, to engage his against it in Infancy, as he did in Circumcision, and particularly as to *original sin*, (wherein the life of sin consists.) Infant-Baptism (as Circumcision of old) affords a *real conviction* of it, and engagement against it. That Infants need Baptismal *washing*, proclaims them

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*filthy* even as soon as they are born; which, seeing they cannot then be by *actual* sinne, it remains that they must needs be so from the *womb*. Thus the cutting off of the *fore-skins* of the *flesh* of Infants of old, signifying the cutting off the *fore-skin* of the *heart*, as often as they reflected upon that Ordinance then received, the Jews must needs be minded, that they brought *hearts* into the world with them that needed to be *circumcised*. Now Baptism received at *years* of *discretion*, doth not give any particular evidence against *original sin*, seeing it is administred after the commission of many actual corruptions: It must indeed mind them that they are *filthy* else what need of *washing* but that they are *filthy* from the *womb*, it remembers them not. And possibly the renunciation of Infant-Baptism, (being so undeniable a conviction of original sin) may be a cause why so many of that way, deny *original sin* together with *Infant Baptism*.

Nor is it a less effectual *engagement* against it, for by a person baptized in Infancy, there is a solemn league and confederacy (if I may so express my self) entred into with the Spirit of God against it, to begin from the very hour, to grow up with him, and shew it self against all motions and affections stirred up in his heart thereby: whereas in persons baptized at riper years, this engagement is of a far later date, and by consequence more morally invalid.

And (as to actual sin) no question but Infant-Baptism doth lay a very great obligation upon many persons to detest it, when they consider that they were from their cradle *buried* with

(Christ



*Christ in baptism, and therein engaged not to admit sin to reign in their mortal bodies, Rom. 6. 12*  
And therefore God thinks fit to engage them against it in that age, before they commit any, to shew them that they must begin to die to it from thenceforth, and not to admit any acquaintance with it in any succeeding part of their lives.

*After.*

But what say you to the other part of Sanctification which consists in our *resurrection to newness of life*? Hath Infant-Baptism the advantage of promoting that more then the same administration at riper years?

*P. ad.*

Yes, no question, whether you look upon it in the *Graces* or *Duties* thereof. First, in the *exercising saving graces*; It promotes the actings of several graces, as

1. *Faith*: which I shall demonstrate,
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| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1. \text{From the ground} \\ 2. \text{From the practise} \end{array} \right\}$ | of Infant-Baptism. |
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1. The *ground* of Infant-Baptism, Gods Covenant with us in our Ancestors, carries herein great weight. It is a very usual thing for posterity to put much confidence in such an one as hath been a constant friend to the family whence they are descended: Thence the Psalmist, *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place from generation to generation; and our fathers have told us what wonders thou didst in their dayes, &c.* Thence the Saints in their prayers so often act faith upon the Covenant of fore-fathers, *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saith Moses, Exod. 32. 13* and they do not do it rashly, for God gives sufficient ground for such a confidence in this particular. He professeth himself a *God shewing mer-*

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*Psal. 44. 1*

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cy unto thousands of generations of them that love him (in the second Commandement) and that not barely upon their *personal* account, but upon the account of their *parents*, as he *visits the iniquity of the parents that hate him*, upon the *third and fourth generation*; although they be not personally partakers of their guilt.

God puts a special Emphasis of favour upon the people of *Israel*, when he calls them the *seed of Abraham his friend*, *Isai. 41. 8. q. d.* I owe you more favour than other, because you are the seed of a good friend of mine, and I allow you to make use of me accordingly.

And this in *spiritual* and *temporal* mercies.

In *spiritual* mercies, God bestows them (many times) upon the account of his Covenant with Ancestors, on their children. Two eminent proofs I have for it. The one is *Rom. 11. 28.* where the Apostle discoursing of the calling of the Jewes to Christ in the latter dayes, tells the Gentiles, that it is true, God hath unchurched them, that the Gentiles might be *grafted into their place*; for (saith he) *as touching the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes*, but they shall not alwayes continue so; for *as touching the election, the remnant which are according to the election of grace* (as he calls them *ver. 5*) *they are beloved, i. e.* so as to be called home in Gods time, *for the Fathers sakes.* Gods Covenant with their fore-fathers reflects his special love upon them in conversion, at so many hundred years distance. The other place is *Luk. 1. 71. &c.* where *Zacharias* makes Gods Covenant with the fore-fathers the *rise and spring* of that great mercy, *deliverance from the hand of their*



*After.*

*thir enemies, to serve him in righteousnes & holiness before him all the dayes of thir lives, v. 75.*

Yea, but to this (methinks) I see a double objection arising; The first is, That *Zacharias* seems rather to lay the weight of his speech upon the particular promise of Christ made to *Abraham*, to be fulfilled to his posterity, then upon any hereditary priviledg (as you seem to intimate) accrewing to the posterity of *Abraham* and the rest of the Fathers, by their faith, and relation to God thereby.

The 2<sup>d</sup>. is, That though God vouchsafed such an hereditary priviledg to *them*, yet it may not without like expresse warrant be extended to more then them.

*Pado.*

I answer you in a word to both; To the first objection I say, that it is true, that he speaks of a particular promise to *Abraham* to be fulfilled upon his posterity; but yet the matter of it is only a branch of the general Covenant, that he would be his God & the God of his seed; for we have no particular promise of sanctification made to *Abraham* on the behalf of his Posterity, but what is included in that general one. Indeed he sent Christ to take flesh of his loins in pursuance of a particular promise, but these effects of Christs sending deliverance from spiritual enemies, &c. are collected from the general promise. And so the Apostle *Peter* interprets it, Act 3. 25. You are (saith he) the children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant made with the fathers, saying to *Abraham*, in thy seed shall all the Nations of the earth be blessed. But what are they the better for this promise of Christ (the seed here meant) more then all the fa-

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families of the earth besides, who are as much concerned in it as they are? Yes, for they being the seed of *those Fathers* to whom the promise was made, and who were then the *only persons in visible covenant with God*, their seed (according to the general promise,) are dignified above others upon that account, in that *God having raised Jesus, sent him [first]* (mark the Emphasis of that word *first*) *to turn them from their iniquities: q.d.* If any blessing be derived from Christ unto men, the first fruits shall be bestowed upon the seed of the Fathers and the Prophets, suitable to that other place, *It behoved that the word of God should first [have been spoken to you, Act 13.46.* And so we find that in their 2d coming in, the Gentiles are every where spokē of as appendices to them.

To the *other* Objection, I say no more then was said before, that *the blessing of Abraham is come upon the Gentiles by faith* and by consequence, if vocation, if sanctification of the Posterity of *Abraham* were a fruit of the promise, *I will be thy God. & the God of thy seed*; it may no less be claimed by the seed of Believers *now*, then *formerly*.

You bring that Scripture more to the purpose then I imagined; but I pray you proceed in your argument.

I wil. Suppose we that *Gods Covenant with forefathers includes the giving grace to their seed*, & then here is a special ground to act faith upon, from an hereditary Covenant; and no question, if we plead it believingly, we may find the benefit of it.

But if *grace be hereditary*, how comes it to passe then, that so many of the *Seed of Godly Parents* are so graceless

*After.*

*Pedo.*

*After.*

i. Be-



Pado.

1. Because God bestows it *according to election*:  
 Grace is not so hereditary as Lands and Estates  
 are, to the children of such or such a mans body  
 begotten, what ever they be. but it is given to  
 the Elect Posterity, with special respect to the  
 Covenant of fore-fathers, in the execution of  
 that decree of Election. This difference the A-  
 postle makes between Jews and Jews; the E-  
 lection have obtained it, and the Election are be-  
 loved for the fathers sakes.

2. Because, though there be a Covenant on  
 Gods part, yet it is not (on the *parents part*) im-  
 proved on the behalf of their children as it  
 ought to be; they do not plead it as they should  
 with God; at least they do not improve it in the  
 use of all means, being too indulgent and remiss  
 in their education, a means whereunto God hath  
 annexed many promises of Grace, *Pro. 23. 13. &*  
*22. 15.* So David to Adoniah and Absalom, he neg-  
 lected their education, and God denied the bles-  
 sing.

Now whatever Gods secret decree is, we are to  
 blame our selves if any promise do not take ef-  
 fect, because that decree never interposeth to  
 hinder the performance of a promise to any one  
 that duly pleads it.

And the truth is, the Covenant with fore-  
 fathers is the most likely ground upon which  
 Grace can be pleaded for on my behalf: for sup-  
 posing me in a state of nature, I have no Cove-  
 nant made with me in mine owne person; and as  
 to Gods Covenant with Christ concerning me,  
 that is a secret thing, and not pleadable: but my  
 parents and the Church may plead the Covenant

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of Ancestors on my behalf, as I shall shew more satisfactorily hereafter.

And for *Temporals*, however the former Doctrine concerning the bestowing of spiritual graces upon a parental Covenant, may by some be supposed, to admit of some dispute; yet it is clear enough in things of an inferiour nature, that the Lord hath promised, and the Saints have been encouraged in a prayer of Faith to ask them upon that account.

As to *Gods engagements* in this kind, I might produce a crowd of special places to this purpose, See *Psa. 25. 13. & 37. 25. 6. Pro. 11. 21* So *1/a. 65. 23.* and abundance of Scriptures more.

And how frequently the *Saints* have hung upon this twig, and kept up their faith from sinking, how often they have pleaded it in prayer, I suppose is no less evident from Scripture. Surely it is not for nothing that in the petitions of the Saints for temporal mercies, they mention God under this notion. *O God, the God of our Fathers,* says *Jehoshaphat*, when he prays against his potent and numerous enemies, *2 Chr. 20. 6.* and *David* when he appeals to God in a case of suspicion, that the *Benjamites* were come to betray him at *Ziklag*, appeals to him under that title, *If ye be come to betray me to mine enemies,* *O God of our Fathers look thereon and requite it.*

Undoubtedly *David* and *Jehoshaphat* could and did say, *my God*; yet they chose rather in straits to plead by that Title, as an additional strength to their plea, over and above their own interest in him; and upon that account it is that *Saints confess their fathers sins* in solemn confession.

1 Chr. 12.  
18.



fession, as apprehending a breach in their Fathers  
 Covenant, till it be made up, to be a bar to their  
 claim. As *Neh. 9. 16. 34.* and urge the faith of  
 their parents, and their experience of Gods faith-  
 fulness to them, *Ps. 22. 4. Our Fathers trusted*  
*in thee, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them;*  
 surely it is more then if they had said of any o-  
 ther believers not related to them, *such and such*  
*trusted in thee, &c.* It is as much indeed as if they  
 had said, *Lord we are of a believing race, and a*  
*race to whom thou hast shewed abundance of an-*  
*cient favours, and we hope thou wilt remember*  
*that we that seek thee now, are not only such as*  
*trust in thee our selves, but such as descend from*  
*them that trusted in thee before be were born;*  
 And indeed (even amongst men) it is an urgent  
 plea for any favour, to be able to draw an in-  
 ducement to any ones kindnesse and bounty  
 from a relation of league or friendship between  
 his and our Ancestors: Surely if *principles of inge-*  
*nunity*, so wrought in *David*, that he could not but  
 remember to do kindness to *Mephibosheth* for his  
 father *Jonathans* sake, as *2Sa. 9. 7.* We cannot think  
 but there are some remnants of love in Gods brest  
 towards the posterity of his old friends, when  
 they are dead and gone. It is likely that all the  
 while that the remembrance of *Joseph* lasted in  
*Egypt*, the *Israelites* were well intreated for his  
 sake. For the very preface that is made to the  
 story of their oppression, *Exod. 1. 8. There rose up*  
*a new King in Egypt that knew not Joseph,* inti-  
 mateth that it would have been an incredible  
 thing that any King of *Egypt* knowing *Joseph*,  
 would have dealt so with his posterity. And when

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*Benhadad* is sent to by *Asa* to do him a kindness, *There is an ancient league* (saith he) *between my Father and thy Father*, 1 Kings 15. 19. Surely, if such pleas from parental relations work upon the bowels of *men*, the seed of *Gods* friends may be more confident that the like pleas will steed them with him, because he is of tenderer bowels then any creature can be, and more apt to take to heart such principles of ingenuity & good nature (If I may so expresse my self) then we are.

I fully assent to you in these particulars, that *Gods Covenant* with our parents is a good plea for faith to urge; but all this discourse supposeth the persons that are the urgers of it to be believers themselves; but what is this to *Infants* who cannot plead this *Covenant*, nor believe, and whom our present discourse concernes?

Yes, very much, for it supposeth their interest in that *Covenant* before they could plead it, seeing they plead by *right of succession*: Now he that pleads a right of succession among men, supposeth he had a right before he could plead; so the Apostle speaking of the *heir under age*, who cannot legally sue for his estate, yet saith he, *he is Lord of all*, Gal. 4. 1. Surely had not the *Covenant* of God with the Fathers, here spoken of, concerned their posterity, even when they were born, they could never have pleaded a title to God of such antiquity when they came to years; besides, you must consider that I am now speaking of the advantage which the *Covenant* of God with fore-fathers, and his relation to them, as it undergoes an abstracted consideration from the personal *Covenant* with us by faith,

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affords to the strengthening of faith when we have it; that I may shew that we have good cause not to renounce our Infant-relation to Gods Covenant, which Anabaptists generally do.

After.

But Sir, I remember you promised to lay the comparison between the advantage, that the consideration of *parental relation* to God gives to faith, and that which emergeth from *personal relation*; for suppose *David* plead the Covenant of *fore-fathers*, and *Jehoshaphat* and others do so too; might they not with as much strength of faith have pleaded Gods Covenant made with *themselves* at the time of their conversion?

Pado.

I have answered you partly to that before, and say further here, They *could not*, because they did *not*, I think is a good argument in this case; the Saints do not use to speak vain and non-significant words to God in prayer. Had they had so much hold upon God by the plea of *my God*, or *our God*, they would not (undoubtedly) have added also that of [*the God of their fathers*] Besides, in reason judge you, Is it nothing when I can come to God and say, *Lord, there is an ancient Covenant between my fore-fathers and thee, and mutual friendship hath run in a line from many generations down to me as soon as I had a being; nay, thou wast bespoken on my behalf to be a friend to me before I was able to speak for my self, my godly father, a dear friend of thine, made many a motion on my behalf, he pleaded a Covenant entailed, he put it in suite for me when I was but a span long, and he intrusted me upon that Covenant, and committed me to the society of the faithful, as Guardians and Feoffers in trust to see me possessed of it; and now (Lord) I am*

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by their endeavours and thy blessing upon them, en-  
stated therein: I have a great favour to ask at thy  
hands, and I question whether my own personal plea  
will carry it with that prevalency which I desire, I  
am many wayes unworthy to plead with thee mine  
own title; to fortifie it therefore, Lord look back up-  
on the daies of old, & read over the petitions which  
are yet on file on my behalf, and thy gracious an-  
swers to them, when as yet my bones were only writ-  
ten in thy book. Let it never be said that one de-  
scended of such a prayerful race is cast out of thy  
favour, and the prayers of that race become unsuc-  
cessful to me, on whose behalf they were put up, and  
are upon the file in thy Court of Requests.

But may not one that is baptized at years of di-  
cretion plead all this, as well as one baptized in  
Infancy; (supposing the plea be well grounded)?  
Why then is this produced to shew the usefulness  
of Infant-Baptism above Baptism of riper age?

I told you once before, that I am now shewing  
you the benefit of holding *the ground* of Infant-  
Baptism, to wit; a relation to God by the Cove-  
nant of our fore-fathers before we were born;  
which Anabaptists generally deny, as well as the  
practice of it; and I shall methodically descend to  
to the practise it self anon. However, because it  
may be needful for your satisfaction, now and  
then to be a little immethodical, I shall not deny  
you to interpose now and then what you apprehend  
may stumble you; and swallow the inconveni-  
ency for your advantage.

To answer you therefore to this question, al-  
though a believer when ever baptized, may make  
this plea as well as one baptized in Infancy (for

After.

Pado.



the fault of parents in this case is no prejudice to the child, in the substance of it) yet it is morally and rationally more conducing to the frequent bringing of it to *remembrance*, and (so) to the frequent *improvement* of it, to retain in the Church the practise of Infant-Baptism, because Infant-Baptism doth more peculiarly, and abstractly lead to the consideration of this Covenant of Ancestors, (which is the plea in hand) then Baptism at riper years doth; seeing that Covenant is the proper ground upon which it is administred; so that as often as a child is Baptized in my sight, or I reflect upon mine own Infant-Baptism, I cannot but so often reflect upon the Covenant of fore-fathers, and have very warm occasional hints suggested to me thereby, for the improvement of it in the way aforesaid.

After.

Hereby Sir, you mind me that there is one branch of your promise as to this particular behind, which you will give me leave to mind you of; you have shewed how the ground of Infant-Baptism conduceth to the furtherance of the actings of faith and have given some collateral evidence how the *practice* of it doth so too; I pray proceed in that Argument.

Pado.

I will, for indeed I longed to come to it long since, but that your dissatisfactions have delayed me, and therefore I shall the more willingly undertake it; but upon condition that you must not anew interrupt me in this discourse, with questions concerning the right of Infant to Baptism, or the Covenant of it in Infancy; seeing our discourse proceeds upon a *suppositional* hereof (at least for discourse sake) for I shall not so far

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forfeit my discretion as to dispute whether that which is indeed no Ordinance, be not more effectual to strengthen faith, then that that is so indeed, but let that lie between us. You say, or at least question, whether you may not say, that Baptism received at years of discretion, is the only Ordinance of Baptism. I say, that Infant-Baptism is no lesse an Ordinance then that; I allow you to plead for your Baptism all that you can, supposing it be as you say; allow me (upon my supposition) to say what I can for my Baptism, and you shall be judge your self, where the advantage in this issue lyes, on your side or mine.

Take your condition and proceed.

First then, (as to the strengthening of Faith by the practise of Infant-Baptism (in general) the object of baptismal faith is, *God in Covenant through the blood of Christ Sacramentally apply'd in Baptism*, and by consequence Faith, in relation to Baptism is to look upon that Covenant, and to fetch thence (with special respect to the security of that Seal administred to strengthen it) all the benefits of the Covenant.

Secondly, (in general also) Faith in all its acts receiveth a special confirmation from *experience*; long acquaintance with a friend, and long relation to him, is a very great inducement to trust him.

More particularly, seeing the matter of the covenant on Gods part in Baptism, (which Covenant is the object of Baptismal Faith) is such as containes *spirituals* and *temporals*, we shall (as before) consider them in their order; and if Infant-Baptisme in both these afford such arguments of corroboration to our faith, as I have

After.  
Pado.



spoken of more then Baptism at riper years, then I hope I shall competently discharge this part of my undertaking also.

After.  
Pado.

I expect what you will say.

As to *spirituals* then, such as, *remission of sins, renewing Grace, mortification of the old man, putting on of the new, supplies of Grace from the Fountain head the Lord Jesus Christ* (all which are eminently comprized in the Baptismal Covenant) a man when he comes to years of discretion, may plead the Covenant for these, the more strongly for his Infant-Baptism; *Lord didst thou engage to bestow these graces upon me in my Infancy, when I could not ask, nor so much as desire them, and will the Lord not bestow them upon me now I am a sutor for them? would he be found of me so far as to promise and seal a deed of gift conferring a right to these mercies when I sought him not, and will he not be found of me, so as to confer possession upon me when I seek him?*

And truly, for some of these graces, *viz. Initial graces*, such as remission of sins, regeneration, and renovation of the heart, it hath made me very much a friend to Infant-Baptism, to consider that Baptism is an *initial Sacrament*, to seal the bestowing of these *initial graces* on Gods part; and therefore I verily perswade my self it was not only *intended* for Infants; but intended *principally* for them, seeing to elder persons it could not so properly be a seal of conferring *initial grace* upon them, because it supposeth that *already bestowed on and wrought* in them as a qualification for the reception of that Ordinance: And although the generality of those we read of in the

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the new Testatment, were admitted to Baptism at that age, and it may seem that it reflects some disparagement upon the wisdom of God to appoint the use of such an Ordinance to them to whom (being already converted) it was defective in one principal part of its signification and use, yet if we compare the state of the Church then to be gathered, with the state of the old Church when it begun in *Abram* and his family, we shall find God ordered it in the same manner in relation to the administration of the *Seal of admission* then instituted. The generality of those then admitted, being grown persons, received the sign of Circumcision, though as defective to them in that part of its signification, which is supposed in the present case to be wanting in the Baptism of grown persons: for Circumcision no less engages Gods Covenant for the collation of pardoning and regenerating grace, then Baptism doth, *Col. 2. 11. 12.*

And as for all *supplies of after-grace*, such as the actual \* assurance of pardon received, the actual mortification of lusts, and actual quickening of grace, against particular delays and weaknesses, the plea of Infant-Baptism is very prevalent; for although Baptism at riper age, seals the Covenant (as to these particulars) as well as Baptism in Infancy, yet doth it not give a like *moral assurance* of the constancy and firmness of that part of it which confirms the people of God against fears of being deserted by him, as the reception of it in Infant-age doth: for by the same reason upon which the Saints are many times faine to appeale from *conditional* promises and comforts

\* Concerning Assurance, as it is promoted by Infant-Baptism, See a Treatise of the Author lately published, concerning the Spirit of Bondage and Adoption And the second part of this Dialogue, now first published.



to *absolute*, viz. The freeness of electing, justifying and renewing grace in the respective declarations, & offers of them; upon the same reason may they have recourse to Infant-baptism, the most lively representation & oblation of both these.

Now we know that the Saints, when they look upon Gods engagements to give them comforting and preserving grace, being told (as they are by that root of natural Arminianism that is in them) that God is engaged to bestow them only upon such and such conditions, and being (with-all) conscious that they have failed, and still fail in those conditions; they have no relief in this case, but to fly to the records of the eternal love of God to them, and the freeness of justifying and renewing grace (as I said before) and thence they conclude strongly, that he who (when he fore-saw how unworthy they would prove of any favour from him; and how they would perpetually fail of their duty to him) did (yet) elect them, and bestow grace and Christ upon them freely, will also now *heal their back-slidings, and love them alike freely to the end, Hos. 14. 4.*

This therefore being their refuge, if Gods seal add (as it doth undoubtedly to us) any certainty to his word; then (surely) for such persons to reflect upon the seal of Baptism administered to them in Infancy, must needs fortifie them in that refuge; for in such a case (me thinks) thus could I plead with God for perseverance, and supplies necessary thereunto.

*Lord, the Covenant which thou madest with, and sealedst to me in Infancy, makes over all the graces & benefits of thy Covenant to me, not only the first,*  
but

but the last, the preserving and that though I am ing any mans own defects and of the last, and the beginning. madest this C fan, swallowin puddle of ori capable of an wards infuse And if thou what I would Covenant to that the fatten change her fre ing that fore- The like plea diation of Bap though the Co nant, and no le is administred be under an ad repentance; and same support a not from the C what think you vantage herein strengthen faith I dare not d gument so new deserves serious help) I shall best

but the last, the season of renewing, and the harvest of preserving and crowning grace; I am now told that though I have received the first, notwithstanding any wants and obstructions on my part; yet my own defects and weaknesses, and sins, may defeat me of the last, and so my latter end may be worse then the beginning. Lord, didst thou not see when thou madest this Covenant with me, that I was an Infant, wallowing in blood and pollution, the guilt & puddle of original sin, having no good in me, nor capable of any, farther then thou shouldst afterwards infuse it by a new creation? surely thou didst. And if thou didst then see what I was, and fore-see what I would be, & yet wouldst make and seal that Covenant to me notwithstanding: shall I conceive that the falling out of what thou didst fore-see can change thee from what thou art, and notwithstanding that fore-sight, didst engage thy self to be?

The like plea doth not offer it self from the mediation of Baptism received at *river age*, because though the Covenant it seals be the same Covenant, and no lesse free, yet the person to whom it is administred, is at the administration supposed to be under an *actual qualification*, viz. of faith and repentance; and therefore though he may draw the same support and comfort from the Covenant, yet not from the Ordinance. And now (*neighbour*) what think you, hath not Infant-Baptism the advantage herein over baptism at riper years, to strengthen faith upon Gods Covenant for Spirituals?

I dare not determine so suddenly (Sir) in an argument so new to me as this is; but I conceive it deserves serious consideration, which (by Gods help) I shall bestow upon it: in the mean time if you

*After.*

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have any thing more to add herein, I pray, go on therewithall.

*Pado.*

I pray do, consider it thoroughly, for I propound it to that end, not for dispute, but for meditation; only, I desire you to take in one thing more with you, on this head, which I had almost forgotten.

*After.*

What is that?

*Pado.*

It is this, That Infant relation to God, yeilds a considerable strength to *faith in a tempted condition*, against those spiritual enemies, which seek to devour the soul therein; for here faith may apply it self to God thus.

*Lord, Satan tells me I am one of his Subjects, a goat of his fold; but Lord, dost thou not know, that I have had thy sheep-mark upon me from a Lamb, that I was born in thy family, and solemnly owned for thy Subject and Servant, by the Minister in thy Name before the Congregation? wilt thou lose one that hath been thine so long? Kings use to be most tender of their Native Subjects, and Shepherds of the Sheep of their own race: shall thy native Subjects be more open to insolencies of enemies then subjects of other sovereigns are? and the Lambs yeaned in thy Flock more exposed to the wolf, then others brought in thither from another fold?*

*After.*

But Sir, doth difference of time make any alteration upon God, so as to lay upon him a greater obligation to one who hath been longer in his family, then to another who came more lately into it? I thought to the *Father of Eternity* there had been no difference between to day and an hundred years since.

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So think I, but you are to remember that I now treat not of considerations prevailing with God, but considerations working upon us; not such as further him in point of *faithfulness*, but such as further *us* in point of *faith*. Now such things may be of precious use to *us*, as are not of a like influence upon God: All the Arguments we urge in prayer do not at all move God, but only fortifie our faith to depend upon him. So here, though God have a like reason in himself to move him to take care of a soul that became one of his family but *yesterday*, as of one that hath bin in his family *forty years* or upwards; yet it must needs be a more rational *encouragement to us* to depend upon him, *now* that we have been related *so long* to him, then it would be to have begun a relation but *yesterday*.

Well Sir, I shall hang up this upon the file also, among those other heads which I mean to take time to look over more particularly; but I shal not hinder your present progress in the intended Argument. I pray you proceed to that part of it wherein you undertake the discovery of an advantage-ground for faith to act upon, in *Temporals* as well as *Spirituals*, within the Territories of *Infant-Baptism*.

I will, neighbour, ( although I conceive that much of that labour is saved already, by proving it in *spirituals*; for it is an easie conclusion, and that which all *Scripture*, as well as *Reason* allows, to inferre the certainty of *Temporals* from *Spirituals*; the security we have for the *greater* is sufficient for the *less*) go along with me therefore in a few words on this head. And I know not why

*Pado.*

*After.*

*Pado.*



why I should not take the rise of this argument from the example of *David*, whose faith (to me) seems to take its rise from the ground we are speaking of, viz. Gods Covenant-engagement to him in infancy (whereof Circumcision then was, and Baptism now is, a confirming signe) The place is, *Psalms* 22. 9, 10, 11. He begs for a temporal mercy, *deliverance from his enemies*, under whom he was so grievously afflicted, that he was therein a *fi* Type of *Christ* upon the cross, to whom therefore many passages of this Psalm are applied in the Gospel. He urgeth many arguments of faith in this case, and among the chiefest, he pleads thus, *Lord, thou art he that took me out of the womb, thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mothers breasts; I was cast upon thee from the womb, thou art my God from my mothers belly; be not far from me &c.*

*After.*

And what is there in all this? he seems to me to plead only from the experience of *providential* preservations which he had had former experience of, even from the womb; but I see nothing in the text from whence to conclude that he had (so much as in his eye) any *Covenant-relation* to God from his mothers belly, much lesse, any *Seal* of that *Covenant*, administred to him then.

*Pado.*

Say you so? let me see then what I can make of it to the purpose in hand. You conceive *David* being a Jew, was circumcised the right day, as other Jews by the Commandement of God were.

*After.*

Yes.

*Pado.*

Then surely he was in Covenant from that time, for *Circumcision* was the token of the Covenant, *Gen.* 17.

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Suppose that, yet he may not plead that Covenant here.

After.

Surely if he did not, yet it concerned him to do so (as I believe you also will grant, when you consider that *depth of misery* he was in, then which we cannot imagine a greater, and it concerned faith now to *muster up all its strength*) surely he was too wise to leave any of his most useful furniture behind him when he was to deal with such a temptation. This may be a probable Argument for my interpretation (at least) in general.

Pado.

But add to this (in particular)

One part of *David's* complaint in this Psalm is, that *God his God hath forsaken him*, ver. 1. And indeed this stung him beyond all other his afflictions, and his enemies scoff at him for *rolling himself on the Lord*, ver. 8. reproaching him with his faith in God. Surely this will evince, that *David* in this Psalm addresseth himself to God, as his God, a God in Covenant with him, and begs for deliverance as a *Covenant-mercy*.

Now, reduce the plea he makes, ver. 9, 10. to this sense, and it will be impertinent and weak, if it be grounded only on *providential interest* in God from his *mothers womb*; for this were to make *David* argue with God at this rate, *Lord. why hast thou forsaken me? that is, why dost thou not shew me the favour that thou shewest to thy children? be not far from me, that is, give me a Covenant deliverance, I challenge thee on thy faithfulness to deliver me in this straight, according to my trust in thee; for thou hast providentially, (to wit upon the same account, upon which thou dost take care for the children of Pagans, & the yong callow-brood*



brood of ravens, when they cry) taken me out of the womb, and caused me to hope when I was upon my mothers breasts. Were not this (think you) a very forcible plea for special faith, to urge an Argument that takes its rise from a ground common to all Gods creatures? and would it any way follow (in reason) that God must not fail Davids trust now, because he had providentially preserved him from his mothers belly? Is God bound to preserve all those, nay, to shew special favour to them at all times of their lives when they have need of him, whom he thus breeds and preserves from their mothers belly?

The Argument therefore runs plainly thus, Lord, thou art my God now upon the same title by which thou hast been from my mothers belly, &c. and thou hast the same obligations of the Covenant, by which thou wast my God then, upon thee now. I have found thee faithful to that Covenant hitherto, be so still. Will the God that hath been my God from the womb, and from my mothers belly forsake me now? will he break Covenant now, who hath kept it so long? Thus the plea of Davids faith is like the Sun going forth in its strength, with light and warmth enough to chear his fainting spirits in this sad plunge, and valley of the shadow of death.

Now (neighbour) to reduce this example to our present businesse; Suppose I should be in any want, under any affliction or calamity whatsoever; would it not be worth the while to encourage faith in prayer by a like Argument.

Lord, I have been cast upon thee (by my Parents dedicating me to thee in baptism) from the womb, and

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and thou hast (by sealing a Covenant to me) been my God from my mothers belly, I was not without a sufficient ground of hoping in thee when I hung upon my mothers brest; for then I was taken into thy family, and became thy charge, and thou becamest my Father and my God; and ever since, from that time to this, thou hast on thy part held that Covenant inviolated, thou hast given me grace in pursuance of it, and all other good things, and wilt thou not continue the same line of mercy and bounty to me all my daies? what? wilt thou who hast holden me up from the womb, and been my trust and hope from my youth, cast me off now, though I am old and gray-headed, Psa. 71. 5, 6, 9. & 27. 18? Will not God take care for ancient Servants? will he provide the less for them because their work is done, and they are grown children again, who took them into his family before they could work at all, and bred them from children therein? Surely a serious heart knows the advantage of such considerations too well to part with them slightly.

Is there not great odds between this plea, and the plea of another man, who can only (evidentially, I mean, and legally) urge a relation to Gods family for one, two, three, four, or a few more years? and sure the plea of persons baptized at years of discretion, must fall short of that of David by divers years.

Yet still, Sir, me thinks it sticks with me, that had not David been Circumcised at eight dayes old, he had had the same plea, & (by consequence) a man not having been baptized in Infancy, may say all this which you speak of, except you will deny any to be in the Covenant before they are Baptized

After.



Baptized, or to have been heretofore in Covenant before they were circumcised, and then you renounce your own surest footing for Pædobaptism, and come home to the Anabaptists.

*Pado.*

I must answer you again, as I did before, that though every one that is a child of a believer, had formerly, and still hath a Covenant-right to God before Circumcision and Baptism; and so every such person circumcised or uncircumcised, baptized or unbaptized, (at least as long as the neglect is not his own fault) hath the *same plea* which we have been speaking of, yet he hath it not to urge with the *same evidence* and ground of assurance, as he that can plead the Covenant with the seal, hath: and so still (as to that I am speaking of, the footing of faith in such a case) he comes short of my *David*, or *believer*, who in his Infancy was not only *in Covenant*, but a *sealed Covenanter*; otherwise it must needs follow, that the Sacraments add nothing at all to the Covenant in point of *certainly* and *evidence*, which I think no sober Christian will affirm. Wherefore I pray you carry this explication and distinction along with you through the remaining part of our discourse, and apply it, *mutatis mutandis*, changing the terms as there shall be cause, as often as you see a like doubt arising in you, that we may avoyd needlesse repetitions, as much as is possible.

*A sealed Covenanter*

*After.*

I will Sir, as I shall be able, and when I do not, it shall be enough for you to mind me of it, and I will correct my self for adding any unnecessary trouble to you in that kind. I pray therefore proceed to shew the same advantage administred

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to other *graces* in their actings from Infant-Baptism, as you have done in reference to *Faith* already; wherein I assure you (though I am not yet beyond some doubt as to some things you have said by the way; whereof I may put you to the trouble of giving a further satisfaction another time, yet) I have received such *props of faith*; as I hope I shal upō occasion make very good use of, & if you can shew me as much in other *graces*, I shal not look so very slightly upon Infant-Baptism as some, through *carelessness* and spiritual *negligence*, not looking into it as they should, & others through the *prejudice* of a contrary judgment, do.

I proceed therefore to a second grace (wherein if I do not give in as large evidence to the usefulness of Infant-Baptism, as in reason you can expect; I shall be doubly to blame, *partly* for failing in mine undertaking, and *partly* for hazarding the successe of so good a work begun in you, as you give me hope of, *viz.* your full satisfaction) and that grace is

I I. *Repentance*, or *godly sorrow for sin*, with the attendants of it, *humiliation*, *caution*.

As to sorrow and *humiliation*, there is this two-fold ground advanced from Infant-Baptism. (1) From the *kindnesse of God*; shewed to the parties therein, and that upon a double account.

1. As Infant-Baptism reflecteth upon him under the consideration of the *God of our fathers*. And this hath so much prevalency in it to draw penitent tears from an ingenuous heart (and grace is a principle of greatest ingenuity) that the Saints of God in their most solemn humiliations insist very much upon it. Thus when

*Pado.*



*Nehemiah* begins a solemn confession of sin, he aggravates it by *Gods mercies to Abraham*, and *their fore-fathers*, for a great part of the chapter, *Neh. 9.* And God himself frequently aggravates *Israels sin*, by this consideration, *They forsook the God of their Fathers*, 2 Chron. 7.22, & 24, 24, 28, 6. & 30, 7.

2 As it reflects upon the mercy of our own *personal relation to God in Infancy*. And, surely when God aggravates the sin of his people *Israel*, *Ezek. 16.* under the similitude of a *child* taken into his special care from the very womb, he layes a sufficient ground for the deducing of this conclusion; *That for any person or people, so-related to God from Infancy, as he there expresseth to depart from God by sinning against him, is a very great aggravation of sin.* Nay, I have some ground to think that the Lord takes the rise of that aggravation of that Nations sins from the very mercy of national circumcision; for (to my mind) *ver. 8.* speaks much to that purpose, but I lay no great weight upon that; only I will be more bold (upon the former ground) to draw up a parallel indictment from the chapter against a particular Jew circumcised in Infancy, and then bring it down to the present case. Suppose God therefore pleading against any sinner of the Jews Nation in the strain of that chapter, and you will see it yield as great aggravations of *personal* sins as *national*.

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cherry to a pure and holy God as I am; yet when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said, unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live: when I passed by thee and looked upon thee, behold! (and wonder at my goodness therein) thy time (even that time) was a time of love, and I read my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I swore to thee in circumcision, and entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest mine, and I washed thee with water, &c. and I bred thee at my cost, under my Ordinances, from that day, yet hast thou forgotten all this kindness, and rebelled against me. Alter the word Circumcision, into Baptism, and make the application to your self, and then see whether it doth not afford a cutting aggravation of sin. Anabaptism yields no such aggravation of sin, for it allows no man any special relation to God, no Covenant, no engaging Ordinance, no peculiar Covenant-mercy, till actual faith, i. e. till years of discretion. The sins of those who are born within the Church, to the Anabaptist have no other aggravations then the sins of meer Heathens, till they come to believe.

(2.) A second ground of *humiliation* from Infant-Baptism, is from the consideration of the *Apostacy*, that (upon that account) is in the bowels of every such persons sin, as was then admitted into Covenant with God. And me thinks, I may to very good purpose write bitter things against sins of youth, upon this ground; Ah wretch! did God enter thee in his school, nay, admit thee into his family from a child, did he in much mercy



make thee a Covenanter with himself, and when thou couldst not engage for thy self, did he accept of thy parents & sureties engagement on thy behalf? hath he ever since looked upon thee as a Covenanter, and dealt with thee as a friend? and yet (for all this) thou hast no sooner been able to speak or go, but thou hast spoken lies against him, and gone astray from him; yea, since thou hast been capable of understanding thy way, thou hast contrary to the duty of thy natural Allegiance, entred into a contrary Covenant, and confederacy with the Devil and Death, and thine own lusts, and maintained a war with this God, with abundance of youthful heat and activity; all the blood and spirits that run through thy youthful veins have boiled against him. O sinner! remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and renew thy Covenant with God, before by more rivetted and aggravated Apostacies thou provoke him to cast thee out of his Covenant altogether, and deal with thee as thou hast dealt with him. Now the Anabaptist hath no such consideration to aggravate finnes of youth before actual faith or Baptism, seeing he ownes no such obligation to God till personal covenanting at a mans conversion or Baptism, or both, at years of discretion.

And now I speak of conversion at years of discretion, me thinks, the consideration of ones Baptismal Covenant in Infancy, should much promote it, when a man considers the reasonableness of it, the mercy vouchsafed in it, (and that preventing, which consideration adds much to mercy) and a mans own provoking apostacies from it, in my judgement there is much to be said from

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from hence to advance actual conversion.

But Sir, I cannot see the reason of this aggravation of sinne, that it is an Apostacy from a Covenant which I am only engaged in, by the *interpretation* or *acceptation* of another. Infants do not *personally* covenant with God, how then can after-sins, be charged upon them as *Apostacies*?

After.

I answer you in a word, because the *Covenant* then undertaken on their behalf, and sealed upon their persons in Baptism, is no other then what became a duty incumbent upon them, as soon as they had a being. For (according to our principles which I am to suppose (you know) in this comparative discourse) God is in covenant with an Infant as soon as he is a living child in the womb; and God is *Sacramentally* and *solemnly* engaged to him in Baptism as soon as he is *born*; now all Covenants of this nature do suppose a duty of *restipulation* or *repression* on our part. That then which by duty, such a child owes to God, is by a kind of *gracious prolepsis*, (seeing he cannot doe it in his own person) accepted on his behalf, by his parents or sureties, that so (for want of signing the *Covenant* on both parts) he be not cut off from the benefits of the *Covenant*, for so long time as he shall continue under age; and he is afterwards to take this as a *great addition* of mercy, that God dealt so graciously with him, and that (in right of such a preventional *Covenant*) he hath had so long a standing in the visible Church, as a member of that body, under the special eye and care and prayers of that society; which (surely)

Pado.



is no small mercy. And so you see that that very thing which you except against the former discourse doth very much strengthen it.

*After.*

I confesse upon your grounds it doth so, I pray therefore proceed (in the next place) to the advantage which Infant-Baptism brings to the promoting of holy *caution* and watchfulnesse against sin for time to come; the other part of *Repentance*.

*Pado.*

My businesse herein is very much prevented by what hath been said upon the former head; for undoubtedly what promotes godly sorrow for sins past, must needs be a special *Antidote* against sin for the future; and yet if you please (for evidence sake) we will recollect the former considerations, and charge them home once more, to do execution *forwards* as well as *backwards*, against sin for time to come, as well as for time past. *Luther* tells us a story of a Virgin that was wont to resist temptations with this answer, *Baptizata sum, I am Baptized, (Satan) and being washed, shall I with the sow wallow in the mire again?* I confesse, this is a prevalent caution from the general consideration of Baptism, but I am much mistaken if it conclude not more forcibly, when strengthened with this special circumstance of the time of the Administration which we are now handling. Thus, *Shall I sin against an ancient friend, mine and my fathers God? Shall I sell the inheritance of my fathers? 1 Kin. 21. 3, 4. For sake my fathers friend. Prov. 27. 10. Shall I break an old Covenant struck with God from the cradle? Shall I now forsake my Master in whose house I was born, and admitted to the priviledges of his family*

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family as soon as I was born? Shall I now be reconciled to sin, to which I was a sworn enemy from my mothers brest? God did me the greatest kindness I was capable of in my Infancy, and what wrong hath he done to me since that time, that I should now entertain a motion of unfaithfulness to him? God hath been my master these fourscore years (said old Policarpus) and he hath all this while done me no hurt, and shall I forsake him now? Surely all the arrows in the quiver of Anabaptism will not pierce so deep into the heart of a tentation, as this will.

By this time, I hope, I have performed my undertaking in this part also, concerning Repentance; and what is said in these two graces, faith and repentance, I shall not need to tell you that all other graces of the Spirit are deeply concerned in, seeing they all fight under their banners, either by way of influence, or concomitance, or consequence; so that I think it needlesse labour to instance in more, except your dissatisfaction require it; for the sake whereof I shall not think it lost labour to repeat what hath been said over and over, but upon any other account I shall not think it necessary to enlarge.

Sir, I am, I conceive, able to save you the labour of what you have to say, from what you have said; and therefore am very willing to give your discourse a dismissal from this head of the improvement of graces from the principles and practise of Infant-Baptism: As I remember it yet remains that you say as much in reference to the duties of a new life, as you have concerning the graces.

After.



I confess, that part of my task is yet behind, but I hope I shall dispatch that too, with the more ease, out of the provisions I have already laid in for it in the former part of our discourse. In a word then,

*Duties of a new life are either*

1. Such, as *directly, primarily, and immediately* terminate in God.
2. or such as *mediately, secondarily, and indirectly* respect him.

Of the *former* sort are all *duties of Religion*, strictly so called, duties of the *first Table*.

Of the *latter* sort are *duties of Relation*, duties of the *second Table*.

[*First,*] Concerning *Duties of the first Table*, exercises of practical godlinesse, and such as concern the immediate service of God, surely it was no *idle phrase* which the Apostle Paul used, when he gives an account of the manner of his life before *Felix*, in these termes, *after the manner which they call Heresie, so serve I the [God of my fathers]* Act. 24. 14 & when *Israel* sings a song of praise to God, the title they give God, is the same, *He is [my fathers God]* and *I will exalt him*, Exod. 15. 2. which is (to me) an expression of a more then ordinary *Emphasis*, because it is added to [*my God;*] *He is [my God]* and *I will prepare him an habitation*; *He is (moreover) [my Fathers God,]* and *I will exalt him*. Surely these holy men thought themselves obliged to serve and worship God (beyond others) upon the account of that *Hereditory* relation to God, which the grounds of our Infant-Baptism hold forth (as is before declared) and those of Anabap-

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tism deny. *Born Heathens*, though God were (it may be) very providentially gracious to their *Fathers*, yet when they are converted, never call him their *Fathers God*, but this is a phrase peculiar to those that are *born in the Church*, and so an obligation lying upon them beyond others, to serve him. A strain of like nature is that expression of *Dauids*, Psal. 116. 16, 17. *O Lord I am thy servant, I am thy servant, doubly thy servant*, because upon a double obligation, by *personal covenant*, and *natural relation*, as being the *son of thy hand maid*, born in thy house, and upon that account thine by the *Law*, *Exod. 21. 4.* wherein the children of a *servant* are her *masters*. And from this obligation he resolves upon duty, *ver. 17, 18, 19.*

And then, as to *personal title* to God from *infancy*, I hope such meditations as these have now and then done *me good*, and possibly they may do you no less, in quickening and exciting to Duty. *Soul! How comes it to passe, that thou doest so little, so slightly, for God? Art thou grown weary of thy old master? Surely, he hath deserved better at thy hands, then that thou shouldst be so remiss in service, now thou hast age, and understanding to serve him, who took thee into his house and family, and made thee partaker of the priviledges, and provisions of it, many years before thou couldst do any thing for him; From thy infancy to thy ripe age (if not longer) he was at the charge of keeping thee, and had never a jot of service from thee. Is it no mercy, that he, so good a master, did not leave thee to thine own choice, uningaged, till thou wast of age to choose whom thou wouldst serve? Surely,*



surely, if there be any advantage in his service, (as thou knowest, there is more then thou canst imagine) how happy wast thou in such a master, as secured thee from the hazardous choice of thine own corrupt heart, by laying his bonds upon thee, before thou hadst discretion enough to make thy own election, for fear thou shouldst (as thou wast naturally too prone) choose amisse. Blesse the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me blesse his holy name, for Infant-Baptism, if upon no other account, yet upon this, that God engaged thee to the profession of his name therein, before thou didst arrive at those years of discretion, wherein (possibly) hadst thou been then at thy liberty, thou mightst have been a discreet Atheist, and having once found the sinful sweets of liberty, mightest have thought it wisdom to have continued it, and have lived still without God in the world. And serve this God willingly, who (to thy advantage) made thee then his servant without thy will, that thou mightest (when thou camest to understand that advantage) serve him with the more entireness of will, for so dealing with thee. And that thou mayest be the more wrought upon by the consideration of this preventing mercy, these times shew thee, in abundance of sad examples, how evill a thing it is, to be left to choose a mans way by his own discretion; seeing thou daily seeest, those whom Satan hath so far prevailed withall, as to renounce the obligation they had to God in Infant-Baptism, and thereupon to conceit themselves in the liberty of their own choice, running through all forms (as they call them) that is, all wayes that pretend to any thing of Religion, till at last they end in down-right Atheism, and pro-

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professe themselves to be nothing at all. Seeing therefore it is better with thee (which in a great part thou owest to thy Infant-engagement to God) let it not seem grievous to thee to perform thy duty to this God, thy God, thy Father, and the guide of thy youth, Jer. 3. 5. I pray (neighbor) try the operation of such meditations, upon your soul now, and then, and I am verily perswaded, you will love your Infant-Baptism the better for it, the longest day you live.

I will, Sir, I assure you when I come home, upon your recommendation. In the mean time, I pray you shew me how Infant-Baptism enforceth upon a man the duties he owes to others, and to God by them: the duties of the *second Table*.

[*Secondly,*] Therefore all others stand in relation to us either,

{ *Oeconomically*, or,

{ *Politically* ——— and so either

{ upon a *Church-account*, as fellow-Christians.

{ or upon a *civil account*, as

{ fellow-men and women, or fellow subjects.

[*First,*] As to *Oeconomical* or family-relations. Infant-Baptism being founded upon *family-relation*, as it is, being grounded upon a Covenant derived from the *head of a Family* (being a believer) unto all in the *family* (as in the right of *Abraham* to all his) surely, must needs be a firmer obligation to *family-duties* in those mutual relations. And no question, *Abraham* being honoured by God so far as to be made the *root* from whence the *sap* of such an honour, and *pride*

*After.*

*Pado.*



priviledge, was to be derived unto his family, did draw no small incitement & encouragement from thence to propagate the knowledg, and fear of God to them, *to command his children, and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord, Gen. 18. 19.* that so he might make some answerable return to God, by procuring that service from them to him, which such an extraordinary priviledge called for. And every head of a Family being (by our principles) an Abraham to his Family, no doubt but such as make conscience of walking in the steps of their father Abraham, will make the same use of that favour which he did.

But more particularly, as to the relation between Parents and children, in which relation (principally) this priviledg is derived) there is a mutual conscience of duty, easily deduced from the principles and practise of Infant-baptism, wch the contrary principles & practises do not afford.

I. *From Parents to Children.* Parents hence see ground :

[1.] *To make conscience of making their Children Gods.*

(1.) Partly, *By an external Covenant*, not denying them that priviledge which is in their power to convey to them : nor cutting off that entail which they themselves, with so much advantage (above others who are born Heathens) received from their Ancestors. It is no wonder if they who know not the value and use of their own Infant-Baptism, and what a mercy themselves received in it, do make no conscience, nor scruple to cut off their posterity from it. He that knowes, or believes an Estate not worth

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worth the enjoying, will not care whether the entail to his posterity be firm or no. But he that knows it to be of considerable value, will (out of natural affection) not cut it off; nay, rather, if it be weak, he will corroborate it as much as he can. And thus it is with a godly man of Pædobaptists principles. He thinks with himself, what a mercy it was to him to be a Covenanter with God, by Baptism in Infancy, and surely, saith he, I will not be such a Monster in the pedigree of my posterity, that any one shal have cause to say hereafter, *in such an one was broken off the line of Covenant-relation to God in such a family; such an one entituled all his posterity to heathenism, and did his utmost endeavour to destroy the succession of the visible Church in his posterity.*

(2.) And partly, *by an internal and saving Covenant.* Such an one, as hath in the presence of God and his Church, presented his children to God, and challenged the ratification of Gods Covenant to his posterity, by baptism; will think himself obliged to make them Gods, (as indeed he is hereby) upon a firmer tie then otherwise he would be.

1. Whether out of *thankfulnesse* to God. *Hath God vouchsafed me (will such a Parent say) the priviledg of conveyking this honour to my posterity, and made them partakers of a Church-relation to himself by my means, and shall I not so educate them, as they may hereafter walk answerably to such a mercy, that they may not make God ashamed to call them children hereafter; who is not ashamed to be called their Father now?*

2. Or out of *conscience* of his solemn promise in the face of the Congregation, having made a deed



Pla. 116.  
14.18.

deed of gift, and sealed it in open Court (as I may say) whereby he hath solemnly made over his Children even from the Cradle, and dedicated them to God. Lord (saith he) thy vows are upon me, thy vows are upon me; I will pay my vows unto thee (which I have made) in the presence of all thy people. Thou and thy Church hath admitted my Child, as a visible member of the body of Christ, upon my claim and undertaking: And shall I falsifie my trust unto God and his Church, and deceive their expectations? shall I by my negligence in my Duty, of chatechising, instructing, correcting, exemplary walking, do my endeavour to make my own deed of no effect. What a cheat, what a fraudulent conveyance would that be? And the more abominable, because of the parties concerned in it, God and his Church, who (of all others in the world) should not be thus mocked. I need not tel you that such considerations as these, if duly set home by a serious conscience, may make even an *ungodly Professor*, conscientious in his duty towards his little ones, which no other cords could ever bind him unto.

Now compare this with the *contrary principles and practise*, and you will easily see, that the Anabaptist is no way so much engaged, by his grounds and way, to take care of his Children, but only by the *common tie* of natural affection, and the *general obligation* of the Commandement of God; which (although very strong bonds in themselves, yet) because of the sluggishnesse, and backwardnesse, and untowardnesse of mens hearts (even the best) need some more particular, and special additions of personal engagements to fortifie

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tifie them. And therefore it is, that (though the common duty of religion, be in it self, sufficiently obliging, yet) Saints in all ages have laid *vows* upon themselves; and the more *solemn and publick* those vows have been, the more have they accounted them obliging; (as the case of *David* before named, *Psal.* 116. 14.) and also engaged themselves to the consideration of the many *personal* obligements God hath laid upon them, as an *additional* quickning to the performance.

(2.) And (as Infant-baptism engageth the *Parents of Infants* so baptized, *to make them Gods*, so) in the next place, it affords them a large ground of *faith to pray for them*, that they may be so; and *to believe* (except they declare the contrary afterwards) that they are so.

Think therefore, how may a godly Parent plead the Covenant on the behalf of his child in *spirituals*, even when a little one, especially when his title hath been allowed by God himself (in the persons of his *Minister and Church*) at his Baptism? Now (Lord) *I will be bold to speak a word or two in thine ears, on the behalf of my child, seeing thou hast not been ashamed to own him and me, in the face of thy Church; Thou hast marked my child for a Lamb of thine own fold; Lord wilt thou give empty signes? art thou not bound to make good the writings which thou sealedst to thy people, if they plead them? Lord, my child is of a wolvis nature, wilt not thou who hast put thy sheep-mark upon him, make him a sheep. Lord, thou hast put Christ on him sacramentally, Gal. 3. 27. Help him to put on Christ savingly: help him to put off the body of the sins of the flesh, to be buried with Christ,*

Col. 2. 11.

and



and to rise with him, Rom. 9. 1, 2, 3. And I think, in relation to *temporals*, a godly Father may take the same advantage of this sealed Covenant, to plead on the behalfe of his Child. *Lord, I have little or nothing to leave to my Child, (may a poor Saint say) yet, in that thou hast taken him into thy Family, I count him well provided for. God and the Covenant of grace are an ample portion.* Surely, (to my judgment) there is more to this purpose in that prayer of *Abraham* for *Ishmael*, then we usually take notice of. O that *Ishmael* (saith he) might live in thy sight, Gen. 17. 18. God had in that very Chapter, told *Abraham*, that he would *establishe his Covenant with him and his seed*, v. 7. and by way of addition had promised him seed of *Sarah*. v. 15, 16. *Abraham* admiring the goodnesse of God in the promise of *Isaac*, (which to him, being 100 years old, and to his wife *Sarah*, being 90. appeared an extraordinary mercy) and apprehending that *Isaac* and his posterity were to be the inheritors of that Covenant to the exclusion of *Ishmael*; (as a tender Father) improves the general Engagement of the Covenant to plead for him also. Q. D. *Lord, thou hast made a Covenant with me and my seed, which Covenant, though it seem to be limited to my seed in Isaac, yet (Lord) Ishmael is of my seed too, and so within the Covenant, and upon that account, under a capacity of Circumcision. O let not him be disinherited altogether by the substitution of Isaac in his stead. Is not Covenant-mercy large enough for Isaac and Ishmael too? O that Ishmael might live in thy favour too.* And God answers him, even concerning *Ishmael*, as

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to the *temporal* mercies of the Covenant, *ver. 20.* though his Covenant as to the Church-part, the *spiritual* part were *establisht with Isaac.*

Yea, but Sir, (to my minde) *Abraham* seems to put up that prayer for *Ishmael*, upon an *unbelieving account*; desiring, that (seeing it was so unlikely a thing that he should *have seed by Sarah*) the Covenant might be performed to *Ishmael*, who was already in being: And it is as if he said, *Lord, I am out of hopes of an Isaac, wherefore if thou wilt be a God in Covenant to me and my seed, let Ishmael be that seed.*

Suppose this, yet it makes (nevertheless) to my purpose, which is to shew, *how Godly Parents may improve the Covenant, on the behalf of their seed.* But I conceive rather the *former sense* to be most proper to the place; because the Apostle acquits *Abraham* from any touch of *unbelief*, in the promise concerning *Isaac*, *Rom. 4. 19.* Nay, he sets him out as an admirable pattern of faith in that very particular, by shewing, what *Abraham* might have pleaded for *unbelief*, from the *decrepitness of his own body, and the deadness of Sarahs womb*; which yet (saith he) *he considered not, nor staggered through unbelief, but gave glory to God.*

Be it as you say. But do not the *Anabaptists* principles yield them this plea on the behalf of their Children also?

No; for they deny any such Covenant between God and their seed, till they come to plead it themselves at *years of discretion.* For if they granted this Covenant, and that so visible (as to the persons whom it concernes) that it might be pleaded for them; they could not deny them

After.

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Pado.



them Baptism; for being *visibly* in Covenant with God, who can justly deny them the Seal of that Covenant. To this (as I remember) I have spoken at large before, and therefore refer you thither for fuller satisfaction. And (from my experience) carry this along with you: That *I know divers in the Land, who (to this day) acknowledge their Engagements to their godly Ancestors, for pleading the Covenant on their behalf, when they were not able to plead it for themselves.*

*After.*

But I pray Sir, what meant you a while since, when you told me that godly Parents, from the baptism of their children in infancy, have a *large ground to believe, that those Children are Gods Children, till they declare the contrary?*

*Pado.*

I understand it, concerning their Children, who die in infancy (before they arrive at such years, in which by a wicked and ungodly conversation, they declare that they were never Gods otherwise then by an external Covenant, as *Ishmael* did) concerning them my (not only opinion, but) strong perswasion and assurance is, that their Parents are bound to draw a comfortable Argument from their Baptisme to their salvation, and that they have good ground so to do. Concerning which I have discoursed at large already. Only, I shall desire you at present (supposing that the Lord is in Covenant, and that Covenant sealed in Baptism, with the Infant-seed of believers) to answer me, *did God ever break Covenant with any, who did not break with him first?*

*After.*

No surely, *Gods Covenant is never defective.* All those who being in external Covenant with God,

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God, do not annul it by their own wickednesse, shall find it fulfilled to all intents and purposes.

And can Infants in Infant-age commit any such wickednesse, as may annul it? (for as for original sin, God took them into a Covenant under the pollution of that, with a *non-obstante*.)

No surely.

Then (by your own grant) I have my conclusion. To wit, that *there is sufficient ground, and therefore it is a duty to believe their salvation, dying in Covenant with God in Infant-years.*

But have not the Anabaptists as good ground to believe the salvation of their Infants when they die in Infancy, though unbaptized, and under no such Covenant?

No surely. No more then they may have concerning a *Turks*, or an unconverted *Indians* Child. For that which gives any visible hopes of salvation to any man concerning another, is his visible standing in the Covenant of God. For to be an *Alien to the Covenants of promise*, is to be *without hope*, Eph. 2. 12. so that I may (without breach of charity) say concerning all the Children of Heathens, dying in infancy, *They are taken into the hands of God, who indeed may (for any thing I know) save them by prerogative, and an undiscovered depth of mercy; but he hath afforded me no ground, so much as to hope, that any of them are saved, because the Statute-Law of the Kingdom, doth not extend salvation beyond the Covenant.* Now an Anabaptists faith concerning the Infants of believing Parents, even his own, puts them into the same *irrelative* condition (as to God, and the Covenant) with the

*Pado.*

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*Pado.*



Children of Infidels, and (by consequence) under the same hopelesnesse of salvation. Now let tender Parents consider, who undoubtedly would think it a sad thing to *bring forth Children to the destroyer*, what sad principles the contrary principles are, by and according to which, they must kisse their beloved babes, when they are a dying with that sad farwel, which the dying Heathen gave his departing soul.

*Animula, vagula, blandula, &c.*

*Alas, my poor pretty babe, what place art thou now going to? Heaven, I have no grounded hope thou wilt be admitted into, except by an unusual favour of God, which was yet never heard to have been extended to any: and hell, I tremble to think it should be filled ever the fuller from my bowels. O happy, happy are the wombs that bear not, and the breasts that never gave suck: How much better were it never to have Children, then have them a few minutes, and then part with them for ever upon such uncertainties! This is all the hope thy disconsolate Mother can have, in the losse of that earthly comfort which she expected from thee, that thy early death addeth those dayes to thee in heaven, which it denyeth thee on earth; and that I part with thee now, to meet thee again hereafter in Abrahams bosome. But alas, this Doctrine tells me, that those hopes are all of them Castles in the ayre, a building without a foundation, and thou and those must be buried in the same grave.*

*After.*

Truly Sir, this is *sad Doctrine*, and I think enough to reclaim my wife from her strong inclinations to that way, if she once understand that it

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it hazards the shutting all her Children dying in Infancy out of heaven.

No wonder, if women, when they understand it, be justly sensible of the sadnesse of it; for surely their share in the qualms, and paines; and throwes, of breeding and bearing children, renders them more affectionate then Fathers can be. Wherefore I wonder, that so many of that sex should be daily seduced to that Doctrine. But I am reconciled to them upon this account, that I believe they do not see the consequences of those principles, which they professe; and so do maintain those hopes still, though they destroy the grounds of them? and (sensibly to the Logick of the weaker sex,) hold the conclusion, though they deny the premises.

I assure you Sir, I will endeavour to make my wife understand it, and do indeed heartily thank you for it. For I assure you, (though I have had personal conferences with others of that way, yet) most of the prejudices which I have had against that Doctrine which you professe, I have received from her. Being loath to intrench upon her conscience, in baptizing our Children without her consent, I disputed it with her as well as I could, upon what grounds I had taken up from ordinary discourse; but I was not so well studied in the point, nor so well instructed as she was, and therefore thought fit to let her have her way, and complied with her in some measure. But now, I hope, by Gods blessing, and the help of your grounds to renew the debate, and possibly God may give us both understanding, in a businesse of such a practical influence,

*Pado.*

*After.*



Pado.

ence, to go hand in hand, in the right way. I pray God you may; and I believe the more you think on these things, the more you will be inclin'd to a good esteem of your old principles, and the use of them, which you now understand better then you did before. And I shall dismisſe you to the practice of your good intendments, when I have furniſhed you with two or three conſiderations more, which I remember, remain to be diſpatched according to the method propoſed. To wit, concerning the engagement which our principles lay upon *Children to Parents*.

After.

I pray you Sir, let me not depart from you uninformed in any particular which you think neceſſary to inſtruct me in.

Pado.

You Chatechize your children, do you not?

After.

I did a while ſince Sir, till I began to think it was to no purpoſe to baptize them, and then I conclude alſo, it was of as little uſe to catechize them, till they came to years of diſcretion; ſeeing I conclude that their ignorance, and incapacity to underſtand what they did, rendered them alike unfit for the one as for the other. Beſides, I looked upon both as things, w<sup>ch</sup> at the preſent would be either profaned by their ignorance, or breed them up in a meer form of godlineſſe.

Pado.

I thought principles of Anabaptiſm might eaſily be improved to ſuch a neglect of childrens education; and now I find it too true in you. But friend, I pray you conſider that good Chriſtians in all ages, have laboured to ſeaſon the heads of their little ones with principles of Religion, even as *Eunice* and *Lois* taught *Timothy* the

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*Scriptures from a sucking Child* (as the word signifies, 2 Tim. 1. 5. & 3. 15. And that 'tis Gods command, that you should *train up a little Infant-Child* (by degrees as it is capable) *in the way wherein it should go.* Nor shall you be herein more guilty of profanation and nourishing formality then *Timothies* Mother, and Grandmother were, who are commended for that practise in Scripture. But when you did catechize them, did you not teach them to *honour and obey their Parents in the Lord?*

Yes, I did, out of the *fifth Commandement*, and Eph. 6. 2.

You did well; but did you never take any ground from *Infant-Baptism*, to presse it upon them?

No, nor can I easily see how that could any way conduce thereunto. Do you conceive it doth?

Yes, and that abundantly. For, if the *reason* which is contained in every duty, do render it the more due; then surely, the stronger the reason of any duty is, the more it is enforced thereby. Now, the duty of *honour*, that is, filial reverence and obedience, which the fifth Commandement requireth, is founded upon the reason of that natural relation which we have to Parents, as the Authours of our natural being, education, and livelihoods. And this is that which (as it is a duty of thankfulness) the Law of God requires; (For as for that *sóeyn* or *natural affection*, which is implanted in nature, that cannot properly be the subject of a Law, but is implanted by a kind of *instinct*, like that which is in other

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Prov. 22. 6.

After.

Pado.

After.

Pado.



Creatures, conveyed with their very beings, from the *fire* or *dam* to their young ones.) Now, if the Relation that Children have to Parents, and the benefits which from them descend upon posterity, be capable of degrees (as indeed they are, there being a vast difference (in this respect) between being born a Prince and a beggar) then surely, seeing the *reason* of commanded duty to Parents, depends upon the advantages which accrue by that *relation*; the greater those advantages are, the stronger is the obligation to duty, which depends upon them. Whence it follows inevitably, that by how much *spiritual* priviledges exceed all *natural* priviledges, by so much doth the obligation of thankfulness and duty arising from them, more strongly emerge from the relation which we bear to those, by whom they are derived to us. Wherefore (to conclude this point) it seems also undeniably to follow; that those Parents to whom we owe a *derivation of Christianity*, and a visible *relation to God* (if (at least) we judge these to be any priviledgs) are, in a more eminent manner, entituled unto the *duty* which they require from their Children, then otherwise they could be. And indeed not only *Reason*, but *Scripture* also affords sufficient confirmation to this truth. For if the obedience of Children to Parents be by the Apostles Rule to be paid, *ἐν κυρίῳ*, in the Lord; Eph. 6. 1. that is, for the Lords sake, then (beyond all question) it is most due to those Parents, from whom that relation to the Lord, upon which obedience is founded, is derived to them. And (if I be not grossly mistaken) our principles (and

of Infant-Baptism  
(and not those of the Anabaptists) whence this consideration  
Truly Sir, I thank you for the information which I hope, I shall improve of, and I do not deny myself the advantage of an obligation upon my children to home this wholeness to you and others, who I doubt not they should. Only, because of baptizing grown persons, to promote the duties of fellowship, I pray you (for as me some help in this point) that in the primitive times was a matter of choice, right; and the restoring of the only way to reformations which seem necessary in the baptizing of Infants, by ignorant & profane persons Christians and make a Church among us, as we experience. Shew me the relation to Church-Relations, that most willingly satisfy me also. Wherefore I  
1. That in the primitive times not baptized into Church determine from Scripture probable to the contrary beyond dispute because there were no Children

(and not those of the *Anabaptists*) are the root whence this consideration also springs.

Truly Sir, I thank you for this additional information, which I hope, I shall make a comfortable improvement of; and I do intend, by Gods help, not to deny my self the advantage of laying such an obligation upon my child any longer. The Lord set home this wholesom lesson upon my children, and others, who I doubt, do not consider of it as they should. Only, because the contrary practise of baptizing grown-persons, seems more to promote the *duties of fellowship and communion with others*, I pray you (for a close) that you will afford me some help in this particular also. For I find, that in the primitive times, Church-membership was a matter of *choice*, not derived by parental right; and the restoring of this is urged by some, as the only way to reform Churches from the corruptions which seem inevitably to follow upon the baptizing of Infants; by means whereof so many ignorant & profane persons go under the name of Christians and make an unavoidably corrupt Church among us, as we have found by many years experience. Shew me therefore the use of Infant-baptism to *Church-Relations*, as well as *Family-Relations*.

I shall most willingly satisfy your desires in this particular also. Wherefore I must desire you to consider

1. That in the primitive times, *Infants were not baptized into Church-fellowship*, is hard to determine from Scripture: nay it seems more probable to the contrary, seeing the Apostles baptized *whole households* frequently; and that there were no Children in all those households,

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incapable of making profession of their faith, seems very improbable. I am sure the persons then admitted at years of discretion, were encouraged to baptism, upon the consideration of an hereditary Covenant to their posterity (which establisheth the ground of infant-baptism) what else means the Apostle Peter, *Acts* 2. 39. to tell the Jews and Proselytes, that *the Covenant* belonged, not only *to them*, but also to *their children*?

2. But (to let that passe) I perswade my self, that the admission of members to baptism, upon personal profession, is a course more directly tending to the corruption of the Church, by unworthy members, then the contrary practice of admitting them *in infancy*. Upon a double reason.

1. Because Infant-members (while such) are the *purest part of mankind*, being untainted with those pollutions of actual sin, of which riper years afford a more unhappy fertility in every society under heaven.

2. Because no Infant-member (as such) is *capable of hypocrisie* (which frequently adheres to the spirits of very many of those of riper years,) they being capable of being tempted to take up spiritual relations upon worldly advantages.

After.

Yea, but afterwards Sir, they grow up, and though they have no Title to Religion, but *Tradition* and *Baptism*, and no more of it but a *bare empty form*; yea, though in their lives they contradict that very profession into which they were admitted in infancy, and make afterwards; yet they challenge and enjoy communion with the Church

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Church in your way, because they are baptized persons.

1. I answer, that though *to be baptized* (by our principles) give a *right* to all Ordinances of Communion, (wherein also we think we walk by the rule of the Scriptures, in which we nowhere read of any baptized person, except upon some just offence given, debarred from Church-Communion) yet we do not hold that it so gives a *right* to that Church-Communion in other Ordinances, but that any person giving occasion of just scandal, may be (and by our constant practise is) excluded from them, till satisfaction given.

*Pado.*

2. And if formerly, and of late (in divers places which reformation hath not yet reached) there be instances to be given of such *unworthy admissions*; yet, it is to be considered, that Infant-Baptism is no way chargeable with them. Seeing that if *Church-Officers* be alike careless in the *Anabaptistical way*, (and they are so in divers places of this Nation) as some of our way, who give occasion to this scandal, are; baptism at riper years, may open the doors of the Church to persons every way as obnoxious, as any of our Members baptized in Infancy can be supposed to be.

3. The *true cause* therefore of those corruptions in the *Churches of our way*, is, that there is no effectual course taken to *catechize* those Children who are baptized, (whence proceed our ignorant members) nor power of Discipline and Government in our hands (for the most part to censure, and cast out those that are loose and

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profane; whence proceeds the abundance of our *scandalous* Members. And let (as I have said) the purest re-baptized Congregations be deprived of those two means to continue them so; they will quickly grow (for all their baptism at years of discretion) as corrupt societies as the worst of ours now are. And some of them in divers places are so already.

And now (because you have given me occasion to take the practise of Infant-Baptism, as it relates to *Church-communion*, into consideration) I shall in the last place shew you some hints, which may be taken from thence to advance the practise of *holiness in a political Relation*, which I before promised when I entered upon the use of it to Family-Relations, which I shall only handle in *Relation to the Church*, to which baptism mainly looks.

After.

I remember your promise, and expect the performance of it at the same rate of satisfaction which (I blesse God) your former discourse hath given me in abundance.

Pado.

I shall endeavour not to fail your expectation. First therefore, the practise of Infant-baptism yields a sanctified heart plentiful matter of praise to God for the *enlargement of the bounds of the Church* thereby, and the blessed continuance of its *succession*, from one Generation to another.

I. As for the former of these: the *enlargement of the bounds of the Church visible*, how much it conduceth thereunto to seal Infant-members by baptisme, may be easily perceived; if we compare the *spreading of this leaven* over whole Nations this way, with the *slow and uncertain* progress

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progress of it under the other, and adverse way of Anabaptism; for where there is one man that takes up Christianity (as far as to the Profession of it) upon terms of *choyce*, we see an hundred engaged therein, by this way of obliging *them in Infancy*. Nay, and in relation to that very *choice*, we find by experience, that many persons at years of discretion, are much swayed thereunto, by their receiving the badge of it in Infancy. For the farther illustration hereof, suppose an experiment to be made among the *native Indians in America*. Let the progress of Religion among them be confined only to the conversion and profession of grown-men and women, in *one part* of that wilderness, of heathenism and barbarism, and enlarged, in *another part* (equally populous) according to the Rules of Infant-Baptism, and the difference of visible believers in one Age will easily appear on this hand by many thousands. For my part, I conceive it morally impossible to rivet Christian Religion into the *body* of any *Nation*, but by the way of Infant-Baptism. And if Christs command be to *disciple Nations*, as it is, *Mat. 28. 19.* surely, (to me) it implies the practise of Infant-Baptism as the only way likely to effect it.

But, I pray Sir, what matter of praise to God for *enlargement of the Church*, can be justly gathered from the additions of such numbers thereunto, the hundredth part whereof, are more Christians by *chance* then by *choyce*. No *Prince* would think his Dominions much enlarged, by the accession of millions of such *Subjects*.

Yes very much. For it is no small matter, that

*After.*

*Pado.*



that an universal *face of Religion* is preserved in a Nation, though upon the *Termes* you speak of. For where all are (at least) professed Christians, under what obligation soever, there is lesse visible opposition against Christ and his wayes, then where the far *major part* are professed Heathens, or Turks, or Jews, or men of no Religion.

And the corruption of Religion would (in such an universal submission to the profession thereof) lesse be promoted, then in the confinement of it to some few persons amidst a generality of men otherwise engaged. As appears in those parts of the world where Christians live mixed with the far greater numbers of an adverse Religion. Suppose in Turkey, where it hath suffered very great corruptions in many main points thereof through those mixtures. And as to the instance you bring of a *Prince and his Subjects*; I answer, I doubt not but if the *King of France* had the whole *Kingdome of Spain* under such an Allegiance to him, as the whole *Nation of England* hath (by means of Infant-baptism) sworn to *Christ*, he would think himself more master of it, then to relinquish it upon easie termes: which may satisfie as to that point.

After.

What farther say you to the *continuance of Religion*, through the succession of divers Generations?

Pado.

I say as much, that we may and are bound all to be thankful to God for deriving our Religion to this *present Generation* (and so may, except the adversaries principles and practise hinder it, *succeeding Generations*) by the means of Infant-Baptism. For surely (in all probability) had  
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our *fore-fathers* left our *immediate Parents*, unbaptized in Infancy, and relinquished them to choose their Religion till ripe years, it cannot be imagined, but that many thousands of them would not have derived to their posterity of this age so much as the Profession of it: And if *our immediate Ancestors* had dealt in the same manner with us, how many thousands of us would at this day have been without any Religion at all, so much as in profession and visibility? And go downward to two or three succeeding Generations, upon the same principles; and how many soever may be supposed in our present age to be Christians, yet by that time, the number of Christians in this Nation would be like a *lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers*, or like a *few Grapes on the top of a Vine*, after the Devil and Heathenism had gathered the full vintage. So that (how slight soever some men make of Infant-Baptism) I fear not to tell (even those very persons) that they *owe their Religion* to it; and they are very inconsiderate in their principles and practise (if only upon this account) that they *undermine* the very *foundation* of succession thereof to succeeding ages.

Surely Sir, you do (by this discourse) *call my sins to remembrance*. For I have (I confesse) been very deficient in the sense I should have had of this mercy, both on mine own part, and on the part of the Nation in which I live. But what farther *uses of communion* can you draw from Infant-Baptism.

An use of *charity and Church unity* in the matter of admission of Church-members, the want where-

After.

Pado.



whereof hath been the main occasion of dividing this miserable Church and Nation into so many *fractiōns* and *factiōns*, as pull it asunder peece-meale at this day. For the principles of Infant-Baptism teach me, to look upon all such persons as are in Infancy admitted to baptism, as *actual Church-members*, till they do afterwards render themselves incapable of that Relation, and are cut off by Church-sensure. This is a peaceable principle; and stops the gap against the most perplexing questions concerning the admission of members upon profession of faith and repentance. For to say what I think in this case (without a design of occasioning any new quarrels with any body) it seems clear to me, that in time of the Apostles, *profession of Faith and Repentance was not required as an immediate qualification for Church-Membership*: So that no one (to my best remembrance) was ever required to make such a profession to render him capable of admission into any Church-fellowship; but they admitted all that were baptized, *eo nomine*, to all acts of Church-communion. So that supposing the right of Infants to baptism (without this profession) as we do, the qualification for Church-membership is therein supposed; and so no new one necessary to be enquired after, except upon some emergent occasion any person so baptized, become justly obnoxious to farther enquiry in reference to admission to, or suspension from actual communion, though his Church-membership in general be no way questioned. And this *reserve* will sufficiently secure us against the danger of living in mixed communions by reason of this charity.

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2. As also ( secondly ) an *use of Christian watchfulness* over , and *prayer* for such persons , who in Infancy are made fellow-members, ( upon a Church-obligation ) that they do not turn Apostates to their Membership. It is indeed ( if duly considered ) a *duty* incumbent upon the *whole Church and every member* to be responsible for the education , and regulation of the Children of those, who possibly may be too guilty of neglecting them themselves , or may die , and leave them Orphans. *These little ones are fellow-members with our selves, and so our care extends equally to them, as to others of riper age; yea, and more (in some respects) to them, than to others, because their tender age makes them more incapable of taking care for themselves.* Methinks it is a sad thing, that the children of Christian Parents should be left only to the *large charity* of those with whom they converse (as others of the world are) without any *peculiar obligation*, lying upon any, to take more care of them, then of the the Children of Turks or other Heathens. How much more conducing to their spiritual advantage is it, to make the whole Church their Guardians, and so make them part of the charge of the Officers appointed by Christ to watch over them, by bestowing upon thē the engaging relation of fellow-mēbers in that body, w<sup>ch</sup> we do by our principles.

Yea, but I perswade my self, this is a thing which is very little considered by the generality of those who walk by those principles. For we see the children of such persons, as they own to be Church-members, are left as much to their own liberty, and as much thereby endangered,

*After.*



Pado.

as if the Church had no relation to them.

No, it is not altogether as you say. For the Church takes so much care of them, as to require a solemn *sponſion* on their behalf from the Parents, or Christian friends, or both, at their Baptism, that they shall be educated in the faith and fear of God; which is an evident demonstration, that this principle is universally received, *that baptized Infants are the Pupils or wards of the whole Church, and they their Guardians; and undertakers, (whether Parents or Godfathers) receive that trust by deputation from the Church, unto whose charge the Infants born within it do (as to their souls) principally belong.*

And if afterwards there be a defect of enquiry into the *discharge of this trust*, in the Church, or its Officers, and so their trust defeated, without any account taken thereof or remedy provided to relieve in such a case, that is the fault of those, who walk not up to their declared principles, & not the fault of the *principles* w<sup>ch</sup> they profess to walk by.

And (lastly) the conscientious care of divers Ministers to catechize the Children of their Parishes; with the constitutions of the Church in former times, requiring all persons to present their Children thereunto (though of late for want of renewing that power, in the vacancy of Church-Government, sinfully neglected in many places) may sufficiently discharge many of us from such an imputation. And (I hope) for the future, some course will be by our Governors herein effectually taken, that whiles we generally retain, (by their countenance) the practise of Infant-baptism, the ends of it may not be lost through the  
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negligence of Parents and Governours of Families, to present the Children under their charge to so necessary and useful an Ordinance, as *catechizing* them in the principles of Religion is; which the Lord grant.

I heartily joyn with you in this *prayer* and *hope*. And shall (God willing) as to mine own particular, practise accordingly; thanking God that he hath cast me under such a Pastor, as will be conscientiously careful of my Children, and encouraging you by those Childrens attendance upon your instruction, which by my paternal power, I shall henceforward require them to do. Mean while, I profess my self very much engaged to you for the pains you have taken in this discourse to satisfy me, in so important and momentous a doubt as this, and hope I shall continue steadfast and unshaken in the retaining of so beneficial an Ordinance, to my lives end.

The Lord give you strength so to do. And for my part, I think this day very well imployed, in that I have (by Gods blessing) confirmed you therein. The Lord grant that others may, by the publication hereof, be in like manner, reduced to a *due esteem* and *practical improvement* of their *Baptism in Infancy*, that they may not either *ignorantly* part with the practise, or *profanely* neglect the husbanding thereof to their spiritual advantage, as too many do.

*After.*

*Pado.*

**F I N I S.**



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Printed fo

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# A SERMON

OF  
*CATECHIZING;*

THOUGHT FIT  
For affinity of subject to be  
annexed to this TREATISE

OF THE  
PRACTICAL use  
OF  
*INFANT-BAPTISM.*

---

By the same Authour.

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Lutherus se professus est *Discipulum Catechismi.*

Ὁυκ ὁρῶ πιστεῦσαι ἀνένυ κατηχήσεως.

Ἡ μὲν γὰρ κατήχυσις τίςιν περάγει. Clem. Alex.  
Pedag.

Νεκρὸν ἰατρῶν, καὶ γεγεννητὰ νεθροῦν τῶτο ὁρῶ.

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L O N D O N,  
Printed for John Rothwel. 1656.





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## To the Reader.

Christian Reader,



*Thou art here presented with a Sermon tending to revive an Ordinance of God, almost grown out of date: what though the neglect of parents in private, and Ministers and Magistrates in publick; and that in some places so far, that it is the great hinderance of those that do practise it, to be prejudiced by the example of those that do not; some children being apt to plead the liberty that others have, and count it an injury if they enjoy not the same: though it be the sad liberty of dying without instruction. And this neglect is so much the more sad, because it is so visible compliance with the erroneous and heretical generation of this present Age, who first decryed it in these dayes of sinful liberty; as knowing how far such an emission would befriended them. Thence thousands of people, seasoned with no principles, become easily infected with theirs: Multitudes of Apostates; concerning whom, all the good we can say is, that they speak evil of the things they know not, and turn away from the holy Commandement, without the sad aggravation of having known the way of righteousness. However, it is a grievous thing that multitudes should daily (through ignorance and error) go blindfold to Hell, and few men take any pains to lend their helping hand to keep them from that sad doom of perishing for*

2 Pet. 2.2.



## To the Reader.

want of knowledge. *If it be said, This is done by constant Preaching; I answer, surely a man may Preach long enough to hundreds in the Congregation (if his Congregation be of any largeness extraordinary) who will not be able to give any account of one sentence they hear, if they live an hundred years under the Ordinance: which will not appear improbable, if we consider that many come to Church meerly for fashion, and take no notice of any thing there, but gaze upon this, and that object; that others are dull of apprehension, and their understandings, in a continued discourse, are like a troubled water, wherein one ring or circle drives out another; and lastly, that all generally, except they be Catechized or extraordinarily furnished with parts beyond their neighbours, find it an hard matter to understand the very common terms, in which Preachers must expresse themselves, and many times lose a whole Sermon for want of understanding, or mis-understanding, of them; For though a Minister thinks he expresseth himself very plain, yet it is almost incredible what strange conceits most ignorant people have of common notions. We that are Ministers of the Gospel may easily guesse at the profoundness of their ignorance, by our own grosse imaginations (worse then Nicodemus his of Regeneration) when we were children, although we had the advantage of education beyond them; what absurd apprehensions we had concerning the greatest and weightiest points of Religion! And I am sure most of our hearers are not arrived (nor ever do to their dying day arrive) unto the understanding of a child of twelve or fourteen years old, bred under*

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## To the Reader.

means of Literature. Many of our words, and expressions in our Sermons (do what we can) are Metaphorical and Equivocal; or, if proper, yet (according to the present improvement of the English Tongue, which a Minister that hath been bred a Scholar cannot possibly but have some smatch of) we have many forreign words, made denizons of our language; which being grown familiar to us, we are apt to use, and with a general charity to all our peoples understandings, conceive they stumbleth in no more then they do us, whiles yet we are to them Barbarians (do what we can many times) even in our own Mother Tongue. In a word, consider that no Minister in his Preaching, let him be never so full, and plain, and methodical, can possibly, cast all the heads of Divinity, the form of sound words, into so narrow a compasse (considering the time that he must take up in the principal part of Preaching, Application :) but that to goe through them in that way, will require a competent number of years, for a man that is but indifferently full of matter, though he forbear all unnecessary enlargements. And (in this way) before an hearer can be thoroughly acquainted with a systeme of Divinity, to know what he should do, the greatest part of his doing time wil be over. Besides, to such a way of principling men, by the tedious method before spoken of, we must suppose each hearer to be able to accompany a Preacher with an understanding & memory, suitable to his daily progress from point to point, & to be every Lords day present; otherwise what he loseth (either through absence or weakness of apprehension



## To the Reader.

benfion and memory) at one time, will make such a wide gap and breach in the rest of his notions, that he is rendred incapable of understanding, and improving many other points, to which the knowledge of that or those wherein he so fails, necessarily leads. I might add here the usual confinement of many practical Preachers, by the inclination of their own spirits, or the secret determination of Gods Spirit, to such a series of Truths, as tends most to some end which they are most fitted to pursue; the main stream of one Ministers labours running in the channel of convincing Truths. Others labours are most directed to work upon the hearts of sinners for conversion; another to apply cordials to the hearts of Saints for consolation; another studyeth, and Preacheth for the most part in a Theological determination of Cases of Conscience, and most of the strength of all their labours, is spent in those respective wayes, to which their studies most bend. Now, how shall an hearer from such a mans Preaching, if he wait only on his Ministry, be rendred (as he should be) thoroughly furnished for every good work? These things I have (in brief) presented to such of my reverend Fathers and Brethren, as (among other Readers) shall think any thing of mine worthy their condescension to look upon it; concerning hundreds of whom in this Land, I ingenuously and from my heart acknowledge that I am not worthy to carry their Books after them; and therefore confesse my self too weak to advise them. Only, for the glory of God, and the salvation of poor souls, and (in the present course which they are to run in this erroneous and sedu-

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## To the Reader.

*seducing generation) for their grounding and settling upon necessary foundations of faith and godliness; I think my self bound to be a remembrancer unto such of our Ministry, as have too much (of late) neglected this Ordinance of God; and especially to those who are of the judgment of Infant-Baptism, who cannot but know that the very admission of Infants as Church-members by Baptism, renders the whole Church, and themselves principally (as Officers thereof) indebted to them for their education. Men, Fathers, and Brethren, I beseech you bear with a few affectionate expostulations with you, on the behalf of the most innocent, most hopeful, most teachable part of your Congregations, those I mean, of the younger sort. It may be they are yet, (for the most part) dis-engaged in their affections: Did they understand grace, and Christ, and Religion, these might prepossesse them and gain their first love. You may Preach out your lungs and hearts to them, when they are set upon their sinful way, and marching furiously in it like so many Jehu's, or settled upon their lees, when their lusts have gotten the protection of a rivetted ignorance, and it may be possessed them with a desire of continuing in it.*

*Surely (me thinks) you should bear your young candidates of holiness, whom you have washed in Baptismal water, pleading with you thus:*

*Sirs, by your Ministry, we are devoted to the service of one God, in a glorious Trinity of persons. How shall we serve him whom we know not? Think you, we can ever own it for a mercy, or a priviledge, to be admitted into a Covenant, which we understand not? And will it*

*not*



## To the Reader.

not be the greatest temptation to us, to renounce that Ordinance, because we cannot tell what good it doth us? Our present Age, renders us waxy and ductile, easily moulded into any form. Why do you not fore-stall the market of Satan and Seducers, by prepossessing us for God? Why are we dedicated to God in our Infant-age, if not to engage us to be his betime? And how can that engagement be compleat, except we give our selves a sacrifice knowingly, as once we were offered by our parents without our knowledg? And how can we offer our selves a sacrifice, but in a *reasonable service*, Rom. 12. 1? Did you then only admit us to the empty name of *Christians*, and Church-members, that we might afterwards (for want of knowledge of our duty) live and die the verier Heathens? You preach truth, and we heare it, but our bottles are too narrow mouth'd, to take in so much at once; nay, so great a stream striving for admission at once, causeth all to runne beside. You preach to work upon our Consciences, but work upon our understandings first, and deale with us according to our capacities. Give us *milk as babes*, and that will strengthen our stomacks to digest *stronger meate* in time. Our Parents, (many of them, most of them) are ignorant, or carelesse of the performance of so necessary a duty. We are therefore devolved upon you, as our spiritual Fathers. Let it not seem much to you to descend beneath your selves, and the heights of your learned Notions and lofty speculations, to lisp principles

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## To the Reader.

ciples a little with your babes in Christ; The great Apostle did so, and was never the *less* for it. And it will be no whit to your discomfort at the last day, that you have denyed your greatest excellency, which makes you taller by the head and shoulders then other men, for the glory of Christ, and the salvation of souls, by becoming all things to all persons, and ages, that you might win some.

*Dear and honoured Sirs what shall any of us reply to so rational a plea? Yea, how much shall we come short of our duty, if we do not grant it, and act accordingly? If we be Shepherds, like Christ the great Shepherd, we must carry the Lambs in our bosome, as well as drive the elder sheep before us. If we be Fathers indeed we must teach our children to go by the forms, and walls, and goe-cart, who cannot goe alone, till they gather skill and strength enough to do so. For my part, I had not made so bold with you, but upon a principle (I hope) of self-denial, chusing rather to adventure the censure of my reverend Fathers and elder brethren, then to suffer the souls of so many of my younger brethren and sisters in the Lord, as are daily born into the Church by baptism, to be starved at nurse for want of milk. As for the means of redressing these sad mischiefs, I know none like the conscionable practise of Catechizing fortified with the Magistrates concurrence, to command both the Ministry to do their duty therein & all Parents & Masters to present their children and servants under some severe penalty therunto. For truly the Ministers are not altogether to blame in this thing. Many of the would do more in it, could they prevail with their people to put*



## To the Reader.

to their helping hands : but this is many times the lot of industrious Ministers, they would Catechize willingly, but that they can prevail with very few to be willing to be Catechized. Is there no balm in Gilead? no power in the Magistrates hand to heal this evil disease of spiritual sloth and carelesse in attending upon publick Ordinances? Honourable Patriots, we desire not you should force the consciences of any to consent to what they see not ground for from the Scriptures; but we desire, you should bring them where they may be informed, and then let God work. We would teach them their duty to you, together with their duty to God, as well, and ( I hope ) better then those private Teachers, whom they have yet (by a publick allowance) liberty to follow; we act in the face of the Sun, we infuse no principles in corners, but what we preach publicly; you know our doctrine and our conversation. Do the levelling Anti-Magistratical doctrines that fly all abroad about the Land flow from our Congregations or theirs? Is it not safer to have children principled by us in a publick way, by Catechismes appointed by Authority, then by others in private, who (some of them) teach either the Raccovian, or the Munsterian principles, or (which is worse then both) the horrid Gallimaufrey of Errours and Heresies, raked up out of all the kennels & dunghils of the former and present Ages, lately penned, and Printed with enlargments by John Bidle. For my part, I think publick Catechizing, yields the greatest security to the Magistrate that can be of his subjects, especially the very prime, and cream of them, the youth; who if they be poisoned by such principles

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## To the Reader.

as dare not abide the light, may create unknown dangers to him, when he thinks himself most secure. And I think, that was the Politick ground of that project (some years since) of taking the children of Papists out of their hands, and giving them Protestant education.

The Lord in his time convince us all of our duty, and quicken us to it: that we may by laying the sound grounds of Religion in the youth of these Nations, provide for the maintenance of Truth and Holinesse in succeeding generations. Mean while I have done my endeavour to the furtherance of this work, and (I hope) removed all rational impediments thereunto, in the following Sermon; which I leave in thy hands, Christian Reader, wishing it may work upon thee, whoever thou art, in thy capacity, to yield, a ready assistance to the furtherance of so eminently useful an Ordinance. Vale & fruere.

From my study  
at Reading,  
Octob. 25. 1654.

Thy affectionate  
friend, and servant  
in the Gospel,

SIMON FORD.





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P R O V. 22. ver. 6.

*Train up [ or Catechize ] a child in the  
way he should go; and when he is old he  
will not depart from it.*

**T**He Ordinance of *Catechizing* or grounding children in the principles of Christian Religion, hath been so constant a custome in all Ages and Churches, that none ever professedly set himself against it, but those that made it their businesse to promote *ignorance*, and (by means thereof) to propagate *Atheism*, or *Heresie*. And as for such persons, we need not wonder, that they engage themselves so hotly against it, if we consider, how great a means it is, both by way of *Antidote*, to prevent, and by way of *medicine*, to cure those *Egyptian botches*, where ever it is used as it ought to be. As for *Atheism*, it is either *notional*, or *practical*. It is doubted a-  
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mong learned men, whether ever there were any of the *former* sort of Atheists in the world. But if ever there were any, whose heart in earnest told him, there is no God, I dare confidently affirm, his tender years were not seasoned with the contrary truths, the knowledge of the nature, attributes, and service of him. And for *practical* Atheism, 'tis next to impossible, that without mighty struglings of a convinced judgment, and grievous *reluctancies* of conscience, any man should with an high hand continue in such Atheistical courses as proclaim to the world that the fear of God is not before his eyes, who hath from his infancy been instructed in the principles of faith and godliness. And lastly, the present spreading of *damnable heresies*, (being a disease that runs mostly among ignorant and unprincipled persons) plainly evinceth that the cure of that *gangrene* must be by the contrary, that is, grounding them in the knowledge of the principles of Religion; that being the most proper Antidote against that infection which spreads most in dark corners, to oppose it with the discovering light of foundation-truths. No wonder then if when Satan endeavours (upon such designs) to beat down this *Ordinance*, the faithful Ministers of Christ in all Ages, have perpetually made use of it as their strongest bulwark against his batteries; and laboured to secure the truths of God by an holy prepossession of the hearts of young ones with the sacred *Magazine of Fundamental Principles*, from whence, upon all assaults, they may be able to fetch a *scriptum est*, for offence and defence, as becomes

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disciplined and *trained souldiers* of Jesus Christ. Thence in the *Primitive* times (as all Histories of that time inform us) there were *two Regiments* of these trained souldiers in the Church, who were all called *κατηχέμενοι*, the *Catechised*.

1. *Some of age*, who being converted from *Judaisme* or *Gentilisme*, to Christianity, were before baptism thoroughly tried in their knowledge of that Religion which they undertook to professe, least they should easily afterwards be drawn to apostatize from that God whom they *ignorantly worshipped*. Thence it is the judgement of able Divines, that the account that was taken of these persons, was called *διδασχὴ βαπτισμῶν*, Heb. 6. 2. *the doctrine of Baptismes*, which contained such heads of Christs Religion, as were necessary to be known by persons of Age in order to Baptism, especially of the nature of Sacraments, &c.

2. *Some little children*, who being born of Christian parents, were first addmitted to *Baptism*, and as they grew in years, catechized in order to the receiving of the *Lords Supper*, to which they were not admitted whiles they were *Catechumeni*, i. e. till they were (upon giving an account of their knowledge) as it were discharged from that service by the *laying on of hands*. And therefore the same Divines (before noted) conceive that *διδασχὴ ἐνδεύσεως χειρῶν*, *the doctrine of laying on of hands*, Heb. 6. 1, 2. denotes the Catechism wherein they were examined, who by that ceremony were admitted to that highest part of Church-fellowship, the communion of the *Lords Supper*.

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Now these two Regiments were so closely followed by their Catechists, that as in divers Churches it was a peculiar office to be a *Catechist*, and so *Clement*, *Origen*, and *Cyril*, were successively Catechizers of the young ones in the famous Church of *Alexandria*; so their progress was exceeding remarkable, insomuch as a learned Papist [*Gallenius in Catech.*] confesseth to the shame of their Church, that no convert was admitted εις το φωτισμα, to *Baptism*, (which the Fathers called *Enlightning*, from the *Syriack* Interpreter, who *Heb. 6.* interprets φωτισεν, [enlightned] baptizatos (baptized) qui non penè majori rerum Christianarum luce peritiâque predictus esset, quàm in nostris (non dicam (saith he) vulgaribus Christianis) sed & (quod pudendum est) sacerdotibus multis deprehendimus, i.e. none but such an one as for knowledg in the principles of Christian Religion, went beyond many a *Romish Priest*. Insomuch, that *Ambrose* was thought fit in the present exigence of the Church of *Millain*, to be taken out of the Catechists form and made a *Bishop*; And *Augustine*, whiles he was yet *Catechized*, wrote divers learned books, before his *Baptism*, as *Ursin* reports. Oh friends, that the pride of peoples hearts in these dayes should make them as soon as they are gotten into the *teens*, (as we say) to think they are too old or too great to be Catechized! Truly I fear such persons will prove too old or too great to be good, seeing they turn their backs upon so excellent a meanes of knowledge and grace as this is, whereunto both *Solomon* the wisest of men, & the most glorious of Kings, (& that upon his

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his own experience) and the *Spirit of God* by him, give so honourable a testimony for its usefulness, as in the words which I have read to you.

*Train up a child, &c.*

In the words there is observable,

1. The *duty* enjoined, wherein

1. Something *implied*, the person who is to do it.

2. Somewhat *expressed*, viz.

1. The *nature* of the act commanded, *Train up.*

2. The *object* of it, and that is double ;

1. *Cui*, the person to be instructed, *a child.*

2. *Quod*, the thing whereabout this act is exercized, *the way in which he should go.*

2. The *motive* annexed, wherein

1. The *benefit* attained thereby, *he will not depart.*

2. The *duration* of that benefit, *when he is old.*

1. The *persons upon whom* this duty lies, are implied in the *persons to whom* it is to be performed, viz. all such as have the relation of a *father* to *children*, and so it concernes not only *natural* parents, but *Civil* and *Eccllesiastical* also, as *School-masters, Tutors, Magistrates* and *Ministers*; the care of all such, is in these words required for the *training up a child in his way*; The *Magistrate* must preserve, and confirm by his *Authority*, a *form of sound words*, in which they may



be instructed; the rest must in their places endeavour to drop into them those words, according as their age is capable of reception.

2. Their *duty* is [*training up*], or as we render it in the Margin, *Catechizing*. The word is *hanoch*, and comes from הִנִּיחַ which signifies to enter, or instruct in the elements, or first principles of any employment or profession, and so we render it *training*, which is the initiation of a souldier to his employment, by which he is fitted for service. It signifies also *dedicavit*, or *consecravit*, to consecrate, or set apart, for an holy employment: lastly, *imbuit*, to season a vessel, or dip a garment in a colour that we would have it take; and so it is as if he said, let a child be seasoned in tender age with the liquor of saving knowledge, or let his soul be first *died* into the principles by which he should walk; that his after conversation may look of the colour of his first grounds.

3. The *objectum cui*, or the person who is thus to be seasoned, or principled, is [*nagnar*] which word is sometimes taken for a person entered into that age which we call [*youth*] that age that follows *childhood* (so *Joseph* is called [*nagnar*] in *Egypt*, *Gen.* 41. 12. and *Gideons* son, *Judges* 8. 20.) and sometimes for children able to go and speak, as *2 Kings* 2. 23. the children that mocked *Elisha* are called *nagnarim*; and lastly, sometimes and most frequently for children in an *Infant-age*, even as soon as they are shaken out of the mothers womb, seeing it comes from נָעַר *excussit*, to shake off. or evacuate, &c. And so it implies all persons, who by their age are not

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not confirmed or settled in their way, but are yet ductile and perswasible to chuse their way; years of childhood and youth are our learning time, few *ola* people, or such as are at *mans estate*, but have chosen their way, and are too well conceited of it, to admit of advice about it. And yet it may be, that [*nagnar*] here *non ætate solùm, sed & judicio puerum significat*, (as saith *Lavater*) signifies not only a child in Age, but in Judgment also.

4. The *Objectum quod*, or the mystery in which they are to be instructed, is [*the way in which they should goe*] 'Tis emphatical in the Original; 'tis *על-פי דברו* *secundum os via sue*. Concerning which a Critick observeth, that it must be such a teaching as the party is capable of, as Nurses cut small bits for little children. This is true, but perhaps too nice here; the words signifie elsewhere *juxta mandatum*, as *Numb. 3. 16. Moses* is said to number the children of *Israel*, *על-פי דברו* according to the word of the Lord; or (as the margin) according to the mouth of the Lord; so that this way must be *via secundum os*, the way of duty commanded by God, which is called a *mans way*, *Psa. 119. 1, &c. The good way* *Jer. 6. 16. the way of understanding*, *Isai 40. 14. the way of life*, *Jer. 21. 8. the way of God*, *Mark 12. 14. the way of salvation*, *Acts 16. 27. &c. Michael Cope* in his Comment. reads, *In the entrance of his way*.

5. The benefit of this religious care in all Governours of youth, is expressed by way of a strong probability, and implies thus much, that though it be not impossible, that a man who hath

Leigh  
Crit.  
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been well instructed in his *youth*, should apostatize, yet it is a most *unlikely* thing that such a man *will*: nay, it imports a promise on Gods part, to blesse the means used conscientiously, to *youth* with constancy, and perseverance in *age*, which ought to be a very great encouragement to parents to *bring up their children in the nurture of the Lord*; forasmuch as even in this life they have this encouragement, that *their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* כִּי יִזְקֶיךָ.

6. *When he is old*, though he be *senio confectus*, a very infirm old man; when he hath a *foot in the grave*, for so the word often signifies: or, when his age hath made him honourable, when he is an *elder* or a *Senatour*, (as such are called often *senes*, and *γέροντες*, and we translate the word, *Senators*, *Psal.* 105. 22.) if he come to Authority, he will govern others as he himself was principled in youth; the way he was set in, in his younger yeares, לֹא יִסְוֶה non recedet, *he will not recede from it*; the word is alike, *Psal.* 14. 3. [they are *gone back*, i. e. turned total *Apostates*] he shall not totally turn his back upon it, so as to take up a quite contrary course. He may possibly *step* out of that way, but he will not *set* his *back* where his *face* was, or walk direct *Antipodes* to his former way. He may lose much of his spirits possibly, but he will seldome grow like *dead drink*, as the word is used, *Hos.* 4. 18. there will be some relish and savour in him to the last, of his first seasoning.

The words without any squeezing, will afford us these Observations.

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Doct. I. *There is a way, wherein (even) children ought to goe.*

No age, not the youngest, is excused from its duties.

Doct. II. *Those who have the charge of their education, are bound to catechize or train them up in that way.*

Doct. III. *Good principles which have seasoned our younger years, we ought to be faithful and constant to in our age.*

Doct. IV. *A well catechized and thoroughly grounded child-hood, gives very likely hopes of faithfulness, and constancy in old age.*

I shall handle only the *second* at large; and improve all the rest, according to the drift and intent of the Text, either by way of reason or motive, to the duty therein required.

Doct. *It is a duty that indispensably lies on all those who have charge of the education of children, to catechize or train them up in the knowledge of that holy way of God, wherein they are to goe,*

This I shall fit for Application by

1. Proper proofs.
2. Pregnant presidents.
3. Demonstrative arguments.

(1.) *Proper proofs.*

*Deut. 6. 7. Is an evident and undeniable place, These words shall be in thy heart, & thou shalt teach them diligently, or (as in the Hebrew) whet or sharpen them, unto thy children. That is, shalt fre-*



frequently inculcate the same things, by way of Catechism, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, &c. See *Dent. 11. 19. Ps. 78. 5 6* These shall suffice for the Old Testament. See one also in the New, *Ephes. 6. 4. Ye Fathers bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Thus ἐκτρέφειν, denotes feeding and nourishing, and their spiritual food must be *ὑπερεσία κρείττων*; not only *παιδεία*, which signifies civil education, in manners, common honesty, moral vertue, and civil learning, but *ὑπερεσία κρείττων*, Religion too. They must not only feed them and keep them alive, (saith Zanchy) *faciunt hoc & animalia bruta, beasts do thus much: not instruct them only in manners and morality, for that Heathens did, and 'tis strange, even amazing what rules Plutarch and Aristotle, &c. give for this.* But this admonition of the Lord, is *Christi nrum proprium*, saith he, and implies a training them up in *verâ pietate, verâ religione, verâ Dei cognitione, doctrinam cœlestem in liberorum animos semper instillando*; in true Religion, and the knowledge and worship of God.

(2.) *Pregnant presidents.*

1. *Of Catechizers.* Without doubt all the *Patriarches* before *Moses* were such, for their being, till *Moses*, no written Word of God, the mind of God was undoubtedly conveyed from Fathers to children by tradition; and (as undoubtedly) through the diligence of some parents, and the neglect of others in this duty, the true knowledge of God, continued in *Seths*, and *Noahs*, and *Sems*, and *Abrahams* families, whiles most of the rest turned Heathens and Idolaters. Con-

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cerning *Abraham*, the Scripture is expresse, *Gen.* 18. 19. *I know Abraham* (saith God) *that he will command his children and his household after him, &c.* q. d. I know *Abraham* so well, that of all men he will not neglect it. *David* was so; see how he Catechizeth *Solomon* his son, *1 King.* 2. 2, 3. *1 Chron.* 28. 9. *And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind, &c.* So useful a way it was, that he invites others also to learn of him, *Psa.* 34. 11. the *Catechism* is more large, *Prov.* 4. 4. &c. *Bathsheba* also, the mother, who took no lesse pains with *Solomon*, as appears from his own mouth, *Prov.* 31. 1. The *Apottle Paul* thought it not more beneath him to give *milk to babes*, i. e. to instruct ignorant and weak Christians in plain *Catechism*-grounds of Religion, more then to *speake wisdom*, i. e. higher truths among knowing and judicious Christians, *1 Cor.* 3. 1, 2. whom he calls *perfect*. This also in *2 Tim.* 1. 5. and 3. 15. compared, is the special commendation of *Lois* and *Eunice*. Afterwards it became a special office in the Church to be a *Catechist* (*ut supra.*)

2. Of *Catechized*. Thus it is most likely, *Henoch*, holy *Henoch* that walked with God, and whom God so gloriously translated to himself, was thus instructed, and this appears from his very name-which is taken from the word in my Text, *Chanak*, and signifies *Catechized*, or *instructed*. Likely *Abel* was so before him instructed in the way of sacrificing and worshipping God with acceptance (most likely) by *Adam* his father. Concerning *Solomon* it is clear before. *Theophilus*, whom  
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the Spirit of God honours so far as to admit him to be the first person to whom any portion of Scripture was dedicated, was thus catechized in the History of the Gospel, *Luk. 1. 4.* *περὶ ὧν κατηχήθη.* So was *Apollos*, to whom this commendation is given, that he was a man mighty in the Scriptures, *Act. 18. 25.* he was *κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου.* *Paul* himself was brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, *Act. 22. 3.* a great Jewish Doctor. *Timothy* is commended that *ἀπὸ βρέφους*, from a suckling he had known the Scriptures, *2 Tim. 3. 15.* Nay, what shall we say when our Saviour himself condescends to be catechized? for so divers interpret, his hearing the Doctors, and asking them questions, which was the way of their training youth; and 'tis likely, so *Paul* was bred at the feet of *Gamaliel*. What famous Fathers were *Catechumeni*, I have in part shewn before. To whom let me adde *Arnobius*; And *Luther* professeth, though he were a studied Divine, yet he was beholden to Catechism.

(3.) *Demonstrative Arguments.* The first is, in this Syllogisme.

R. 1.

*If there be a way wherein children must go, and they cannot, without being catechized, know that way; then it is the duty of those that have charge of them, so to catechize them.*

*But there is a way wherein they ought to go, and they cannot know this way without catechizing, &c.*

First, that children in their tenderest years, have a way in which they should go, a duty belonging to their age is clear.

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member their Creator in the dayes of their youth, Eccl. 12.1. And the persons spoken to are those whose vain courses the wise man truly reprehends in the close of the former chapter. Where he minds children, and young men alike, of the ficklenesse of those buds and blossomes, of their prime; *childhood, saith he, and youth are vanity, ch. 11. 10.*

Hence God commends *Timothy* for having learned the Scriptures, ἀπο βρέφους from a sucking child, 2 Tim. 3. 15.

*Solomon* was instructed very young; for *Josephus* saith, he was but fourteen years old, others but twelve, when he began to reign, & his parents had catechized him before that age. And tis not inconsiderable, that God takes children themselves into covenant, Deut. 29. 11.

2. This for their duty to God. They have also a duty which they owe to parents, Eph. 6. 1.

And both these are clear, in that God appoints correction as a great means to keep them in, even from their Infancy. Now God allows not correction but for faults, and there can be no fault where there is no duty. But God appoints the rod for little children, See Pro. 22. 15. Foolishnesse, i. e. wickednesse, is bound in the heart of a child, implying that there is a bundle of it, and that it is fixed, settled, natural; what then is the way to remove it? the rod of correction shall fetch it out.

Pro. 23. 13. Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die; implying that there are damning corruptions in Infants hearts, and the way to save them from damnation is correction. Sure God doth not

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promise salvation to children barely because they are whipped and corrected; but as the end of that means when rightly used, seeing the rod is an instrument to bring the child into a way of salvation. And 'tis observable that the word is נֶעַר in both places as in my Text.

2. That they cannot know this way without instruction, is clear,

1. If we consider that none is born a Christian, farther then in profession, Job. 11. 12. *Man is born like a wild asses colt.* Vain man, or empty man is foolish, and he is born so; like an *asse*, dullest and foolishlest of all creatures, (foolish to a proverb) and like a *wild asse*, the dullest and most unteachable of Asses, and such a *colt* is man born.

2. That we have no knowledge by inspiration without the use of means. A child would neither speak nor go, were he not taught; though God can give both without means, yet he will not, so neither will he infuse knowledge immediately, having appointed means for us to use to that end. If a child be bred where the name of God, and Christ, and religion is not heard, needs must he be an Atheist.

R. 2.

Secondly, Reason teacheth us, that when we attempt to alter the natural disposition of any thing, we must begin betimes. A crooked tree will *break* rather than *bend*, when old, that would have been set strait when it was young, though it were never so crooked; and when we will tame any creatures that are by nature wild, we take them young, and use them to the discipline which we mean to bring them to. A young *horse*, is fittest

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to learn a *pace*, and a young *spaniel* to *hunt*, and therefore we put them to it in that age. We deale so with *children* in the things of the *world*; we instruct them in reading, writing, needle-work, musick, in their tender years. Hereby we condemn our selves in the presence of God and good men, if we neglect to take the same course for principling them in the wayes of God. A childes age is tender and pliable, a young twig that you may bend any way, if you take him betimes; but if you let him get head, and grow stout before you handle him, (besides that he must needs grow crooked, seeing 'tis so natural to him) he will be incapable of being reduced to order. When persons are children, fond parents think them *too young*, and when they are a little grown towards men and women, they think themselves *too old* to be instructed; and so many poor sottish soules (what between their parents negligence, and their own pride and conceitednesse) perish without understanding, and as they live, dye like beasts. Therefore 'tis said, *he that loves his child chastens betimes*, Prov. 13. 24.

Thirdly, *If God requires constancy and perseverance in a good way to the end of the longest life, then (as a means thereunto) he requires, youth should be catechized in that way. But God requires constancy and perseverance in age. Ergo.*

Here are two propositions to be proved.

1. That God expects a man should persevere in a good way, *ad extremam usq; senectutem*. And I hope I shall not need to say much, only see how *Paul* chargeth *Timothy* concerning the truths of Jesus Christ. *Hold fast the form of sound words,*

R. 3.



words, and *φύλαξον* keep charity, that good thing which was committed to thee, speaking of Doctrine, 2 Tim. 1. 13, 14. and so 3. 14. 15.

And so for the wayes of God, we are in many places pressed to *endure to the end*, Mat. 10. 22. *To hold fast the beginning of our confidence to the end*, Heb. 3. 6. 14. *To hold fast our profession*, 4. 13. 10. 23. See another charge to Timothy, 1 Tim. 5. 13, 14. So 1 Tim. 1. 18, 19. he hath a command concerning both.

And certainly there is nothing more unworthy a Christian, nay a man, then that prodigious unconstancy of persons in this our wanton age, wherein the minds of men undergoe more frequent changes then their garments, and become fickle in every thing but their own ficklenesse. Certainly, the Lord hates such *Chameleons*, and *Weather-cocks in Religion*, such children in discretion, as are turned about with every wind of false doctrine, and fall away from their steadfastnesse, Eph. 4. 14. 2 Pet. 3. 17.

2. Now that Catechizing in youth is a great security against Apostacy in age, my Text in the latter part abundantly testifies. And when the Apostle presseth perseverance on Timothy, whence doth he draw his argument? is it not from his initiation into that way in infancy? 2 Tim. 3. 14, 15. continue——knowing that *ἀπὸ βρέφους*, &c. See the end that God aims at in enjoyning parents their duty, Psal. 78. 4. 56.

Indeed, when we come to years of discretion; we must not then stick to truths and wayes barely, because we learned them in youth; for upon this account, a man might be excused for obsti-

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obstinacy in an erroneous or sinful way ; but we are bound to try those things afterwards , which we learn in youth by rote ; and as far as we find them good and sound , to be thereby the more encouraged to persevere in them. We reverence truths and duties, for our parents sake who teach us, when we are *young*; but afterwards when we find the worth of them by a riper judgment of our own, we reverence our parents for their sakes.

1. We perceive that as a tree is bent to the hand when 'tis young , so it grows commonly ever after.

2. Prepossession (we say) is 11 points of the Law , and if God get the first possession of the heart in our infancy , he will not be easily cast out again. 'Twill cost such a man as had good education from infancy, many an hard tugge and pull of conscience, if he turn aside from the way afterwards.

3. Men ordinarily count it their honour to be constant, and indeed it is so, if it be in a good way, for it is a beam of the Divine Nature which is *unchangeableness*. But though the way be never so *bad*, ( yet ordinarily ) when we are entred in it in our infancy , we hardly leave it. *That that is bred in the bone will hardly out of the flesh*. And hereditary *sins* and *errors* like hereditary *diseases* , are hardly ever cured, *Jer. 44. 16, 17. The Queen of heaven* could not be ungodded by all *Jeremies* words ; for they had been bred in Idol-worship, and therefore they will continue in it. If a thing be but *indifferent*, the parents commands render it even necessary in the eyes of children, to observe it. See in the *Rechabites*, *Jer. 35. 6, 7, 8.* And



the Apostle Paul was περιωσόμενος ἐκ πάσης πατρικῆς παραδόσεως, Gal. 1. 14. *exceeding zealous* herein.

And no doubt but the same principles would have some influence upon the constancy of children in good things, if they were as carefully instilled into them as evil ones are.

4. Add to these lastly, That God is especially engaged to such as are so principled, to keep them in the way; and so some read the words in the Text, in a promissory sense, *he shall not depart from it*. And truly I much encline to that reading, seeing God intends it for an encouragement to parents to train up their children in a good way, and that not meerly moral, but divine, and such an encouragement as may give them the greatest security against their apostacy; and he could give them none, like engaging himself to keep them in the way. See how confidently David prays on this account, Ps. 71. 6, 9, 14, 17, 18.

*Object* But you will say then, how come so many that are well-bred, to apostatize?

*Answer.* I answer, (1.) either they are but slightly principled by parents; (and if they sow little, they cannot look to reap much;) or (2.) they do not water what they sow, with prayer, as they should; or (3.) they undo by their example what they do by instruction; (4.) or lastly, their children were never truly the better for their education, but lived in a godly family, as divers do in a prison, and watched earnestly for a manumission from it by increase of years; and 'tis no wonder if such be carried away, when opportunity is offered

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offered, that watch an opportunity to escape before it is offered: No wonder if the fruit fall when it is grown great, which was rotten at the core from the first.

*U. e.* 1. Severe *reprehension* to those parents of all sorts and sizes who neglect this duty. Now of these there are several sorts, and the reproofs must be directed to them in proportion as it is deserved.

I. Some herein offend out of *ignorance* not so much of the *quod*, (for that I hope I have removed by what hath been said, but the *quomodo* how they must do it. They are (themselves ignorant of the first principles of Religion, though *by the time* which they have had in the Church of God, they might have been enabled to *teach others*; a thing which the Apostle *Paul* cries shame on, *Heb. 5. 12.*

(1.) How many *gray beards, and hoary heads*, shall a Minister, upon a serious search, find in a Congregation, that are yet to learn the A. B. C. of the Religion which they have lived in and professed from their Infancy? Truly, that such persons are Christians, is more from the *hand of providence*, then the *grace of perseverance*. If the *State* hold to the Faith, they may, but if the Religion of the *clim* alter, they that have lived Protestants in profession sixty or seventy years, I will not be bound for one to a thousand of them that they shall not dye Papists, or Mahumetans. I fear when we shall hereafter enquire into the knowledg as well as conversations of our Communicants, it will appear so.

(2.) How many *young Striplings* are there that



that get them Wives and are fathers of children, before they have wit to teach them any thing but childish games, and are fitter to be their *play-mates*, when they have begotten them, then their *parents*? Such as the Primitive Church would have kept among the Catechumeni, many years, beyond the age in which among us they are *Fathers* and *Mothers*; and 'tis pitty among us, a married condition is grown to be a protection against Catechizing. We ordinarily condemn the wisdom of such persons as marry, and get children before they know how to *maintaine* them; and is it not as much a shame for men to get children ere they can tell how to *Catechize* them? I professe for my part, I think it a very unfitting thing that any persons in a Christian Common-wealth should marry and become parents, ere they can give an account of their faith. How shall they engage to the Congregation to educate their children in the Faith that they know not? I must besech, nay charge, such parents and masters of families, to get them Catechismes, and let them not be ashamed to learn at home with their children, lest their children out-strip them in knowledge, and rise up in judgement against their parents. Otherwise, I make no question that by that time I have followed this exercise one twelve-moneth (if they will be so good to their childrens souls, as to send them hither) by the blessing of God, I shall make the least child here, that can but go and speak, shame a great part of the elder people of this Congregation.

II. Others offend out of *scruple*, to whom I shall

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shall speak more in the next Use; only let me tell them, *that* conscience that makes them scruple sin is safely tender, but an erroneous dangerous one, that occasions scrupling duties; *that* (ordinarily) a sleight and carelesse, and unprofitable living under duties whilst we are satisfied in them, occasions our dislike of them; and *that* it is just with God it should be so, that God should suffer those men themselves to put their consciences as a bar to the enjoyment of the benefit of such duties, who once made no conscience to benefit by them at all, when they did enjoy them.

III. Others offend *wilfully*, and therefore the more fearfully, and desperately. There be some *fools* in the world, as *Solomon* saith, that *hate knowledge*, *Prov. 1. 12.* and no wonder if they that hate it themselves, will labour to keep their children from it as much as they can. Now, as this hatred of knowledge seldom possesseth any man so desperately as that he should become an enemy to it for its own sake, but he therefore hates it because it doth (and so far hates it as it doth) discover some evils in him, which he labours to conceale and maintain, as our Saviour renders the cause, *Joh. 3. 20.* so is this principle that engageth divers persons so violently to set themselves against this Ordinance, commonly begotten in them by one of these three things.

I. *Error* in their judgments. Men that hold heterodox and unsound opinions, and desire to nuzle up their families in them, are afraid that if the light of Catechism-truths get into their families, they shall not enjoy their dear opinions so quietly; & seducers that *creep into houses*,  
and



and make *filly men and women* their prey, are *boldly afraid* (as we say) lest this course should deliver the prey from their teeth, and therefore they make it their businesse to keep all that they can from this holy exercise. They know 'tis best juggling by a dim light, and fishing in mudded waters, and a cloudy day.

2. Or secondly *vitiousnesse* in their lives. They know whilst the light is shut out of a roome, a little cleanlinessse will passe for a great deale: but if the Sun get in, he will shew a great deal of dust which before was over-looked. They know that a little religion will go farre to get them a name in an uncatechized Town or Family; but when the very children and servants shall be able by the Word of God to examine all their actions, and they shall have as many *reprovers* in a neighbourhood or family as *persons*, they think this a tedious trouble; nay, and (possibly) they expect some service from them, which light will hinder.

3. Or thirdly, *Envy*. This moved the *Jews* to hinder *Pauls* preaching, *Acts* 17. 5. & 13. 45, 46.

To those of all three sorts, I must say this in the Name of the Lord, as *Paul* said to *Elymas the Sorcerer*, *Act. 13. 10.* O ye wretches, that are full of subtilty and all mischief, you children of the diuel, and enemies of all righteousness, will ye not yet cease to pervert the righteous wayes of the Lord? Is it not enough that you are resolved to damn your own soules, but you must draw others into hell with you? Know this, that the more you occasion damnation to, the deeper will your

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own damnation be. Believe it, all the curses of your children and servants that are damned for want of knowledge, will fall on your heads. If the wilful murder of the bodies of men be so hainous a sin, O what an horrible guilt is there in the wilful murder of souls!

*Use. 2. Exhortation* to the conscientious discharge of this duty, by all whom it doth concern. To set home this, I shall

1. *Shew* on whom it lyes.
2. *Direct* what course should be taken to effect it.
3. *Lay down* some inducements to it.
4. *Remove* impediments and discouragements.

I. The persons on whom this duty is chargeable, are (in general) all that have the name of parents. Now that name, and so duty is common to all *superiours*, though not to all in the same way. *Magistrates* are to teach, and so to catechize, *favendo, protegendo, præcipiendo*, by favouring, protecting, yea requiring the practise of it by their Authority. So *Jehoshaphat* and his Princes, 2 Chron 17. 7. 8, 9. taught, by sending out, and accompanying with their power and assistance, teaching Priests. So *Hezekiah*, chap. 30. 22. and *Josiah* 35. 2. taught by speaking comfortably to, and encouraging them.

*Natural Parents* and *Masters of families* are to do it, partly in their own persons in private. This was *Abraham's* care, Gen. 18. 19. and *David's* &c. *ut supra*, and partly, by causing them to pre-



sent themselves to the publick instruction of the Minister, whose work is to teach them publickly, and take an account of their growth in knowledge. That this is the Ministers duty, and so by consequence, the duty of such Governours to present their charges before them, will appear, in that (1) they are not only shepherds to the stronger *sheep*, but to the *lambs* also, and Christ requires they should be fed as they can bear, *Joh. 21. 15. feed my little lambs*, τὰ ἀγνία μὲν. The Apostle *Pau* had to deal with the rawest and youngest as well as the most experienced and strongest; and so had *milk* for them as well as *stronger meat*, and *wisdom for the perfect*. It appears also from *Heb. 13. 17.* where the Holy Ghost chargeth the souls of the whole flock on them, as that of which they must *give account*; and if so, it is supposed they must know the state of them, and must have proper means allowed them whereby to be able to perform it: and for this, no means so proper as Catechizing. Besides, hereby they are enabled to discover the care or negligence of Governours of Families in their respective charges and deal with them in their Ministry accordingly. Add to all this, that many of such Governours and Parents have need to be catechized themselves, and then the family are more properly and immediately under the Pastors charge and inspection then otherwise; and such of all others (though they usually through pride *are*, yet) have least reason to be backward in presenting their people to this Ordinance.

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*Ans.* Even the same course, or a more severe, which you would, in case they neglected their duty to your selves.

1. Instruct them your selves in their duty, that they are bound *to obey you in the Lord*, Eph. 6. 1 Yea, in *all things* that are not sinful, and I hope none is so vile as to charge this duty with sin. See Col 3. 22.

2. Charge this their duty upon them in the presence of God, with all Authority, as they will answer it at the Judgment-Seat of Christ. If this succeed not,

3. Appoint proper penalties for every neglect in Gods Service; abridge them of those liberties for recreation, and other refreshments of your smiles and countenance, (things which are in your power to bestow or deny) till they conform.

4. Correct them, and that more severely for any neglect of this kind, then for any offence towards your own persons, *Prov.* 10. 13. 13. 24 26. 3. 29. 15.

5. If they be incorrigible discharge them the family, *Psa.* 101. 4, 6. the presence of such persons is more hurtful (if the presence and blessing of God be any thing worth) then their absence, *Philemon* 11 *Onesimus*, when unconverted, was an unprofitable servant but converted, became profitable both to the Church and his Master; and whereas *Philemon* had before either turned him off, or let him depart, and counted it *a good ridance*, (as we use to say) *Paul* never pressed him

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to entertain him again, till he was assured that he was become gracious, See *Gen.* 21. 9, 10, 11. yet their usage must be different, as they be either scrupulous, or shame-faced, or obstinate; if there be *invincible scrupulousnesse*. this hindrance must be first more gently, and with more conscientious care removed, so farre, as that it may appear, that the Judgement is. (or *ought* upon sufficient meanes of conviction to be) satisfied; and then to enjoin obedience. You may judge if conscience scruple this, by conscientious scruples in other things.

*Shame-facedness* must be wrought out by bringing them to such duties by degrees. *Obstinacy* must be presently knocked down by the authority and power of the Master or parent, it being a contestation with him for the rule of the family.

III. Motives to this duty concern,

- { 1. *Superiours*, or Parents.  
 { 2. *Inferiours*, or Children.

1. To *Superiours*. Consider,

1. Religion makes the best servants, and children, yea, subjects; Those that have sucked in a conscientious knowledge of their duty in their tender years, will do more for a word, then others for many blows. *Abrahams* family was a catechized family, and see how sweet an harmony there is in all the parts; his wife, an humble dutiful and obedient wife: The Scripture takes especial notice that *Sarah* called *Abraham* Lord, and obeyed him, 1 *Pet.* 3. 6. His Son *Isaac*, what an example was he of subjection to his Father, he

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trudgeth after him with his load of wood that was to sacrifice him, he resignes himself wholly to him in the choice of his Wife, he shewes his pious education in his private devotions, *Gen. 22. 6. 24. 4. 63.* His *Servant Eli-zer*, what a pattern of wisdom, piety, and faithfulness gives he, *Gen. 24.* And it cannot be otherwise, but that Religion making them to behold Gods holy Law seconding all the commands of their *Superiours*, must be a principle of universal obedience unto them. Now religious principles (*in præ*) are not *ex tr. duce*, born with us, but taught; all the regular obedience that you can expect, must be *in the Lord*. and how so, if they know not what that duty means?

2. This is the way to make *Families Churches*, and so (in an especial manner) to engage the blessing of God unto them, and the curse to the contrary. Though catechizing carry not grace with it inseperably, yet (ordinarily) the want of it is evidence enough of little grace in a family; needs must such *families* be among them *that call not upon the name of God*, and so lye under a fearful imprecation, *Jer. 10. 2.* For *how can they call upon him, of whom they have not heard?* *Rom. 10. 14.* An uncatechized family is an Heathen family. Now where God is owned in a family, what a blessing comes with it; see in *Potiphars* family, *Labans* family, *Gen. 39. 5.* and *30. 27.* If one godly man in a family blesse it, how would many?

3. By this means a *plantation of Churches* may be erected. People talke of *gathering Churches* but their way (generally) is *scattering* them, as many precious Ministers find by sad experience, their



their Congregations being parcelled out into private meetings; but this is a warrantable way of gathering Churches. Catechize your own families where you have authority, and when they go abroad in the world, where-ever they light, they will drop some savoury knowledge, and leave some relish behind them. Thus is a good man *κοινὸν ἀγαθόν*, and families are nurseries to Church and State. *Dan. 12. 4. Many run to and fro, and knowledge is multiplied.*

4. This is a notable way to preserve *union in families*, when they walk (all of them) by the same known common principles. The reason of division in many families is, that they are persons of several principles and wayes. It may be in a family of ten persons (if of age) they are all members of ten several Congregations. The husband will not communicate with the wife, nor the child with the father, nor servants with their masters; whence this? is it not from want of early grounding them all upon common principles?

5. If they be *saved*, you will be rewarded as instruments, *Dan. 12. 3.* If they be *damned*, you are cleare, their destruction will be of themselves, and their *blood upon their own heads*. Otherwise, think what heavy curses will be belched out against you to all eternity, by those whose destruction hath been promoted, by your neglect of teaching them better. Let none of yours have cause to say, you suffered them to *perish without instruction*.

6. (As for *children* in special) *Parents*, you have great reason to endeavour to make them knowing and gracious, for their natural blindness and

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and corruption they are beholden to you for, they are hereditary diseases. You would fain have your children acknowledge themselves beholden to you for their being; for what I pray you? for making them children of wrath, and heirs of damnation, a condition a thousand times worse then not to be? A parent is a mans deadliest enemy that begets him to hell, and never endeavours to recover him from that condition.

7. God useth to punish the neglect of this duty, by making those children the greatest plagues to a parent whom he is most carelesse to educate with a strict hand in the knowledge and practice of their duty. Lamentable examples are in *Abiulon* and *Adonijah*, about whom it seems, *David* took least care for their strict education, See 2 *King*. 1. 6.

If you let them *sow wild oates*, you (as well as they) may *reap* repentance in time.

2. To *Inferiours*, and those of the younger sort, (especially) I shall say a few things also by way of encouragement.

1. God values a knowing and religious childhood and youth at an high price. See how he calls for our young daies, *Eccl*. 12. 1. the argument is remarkable [*before the dayes come wherein thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. q. d. Wilt thou leave those dayes for God, which thou shalt be weary of thy self? Will God take pleasure in that part of thy time that thou canst take none in? Thy dayes of choice* (so the word signifies) *the choicest dayes should be filled up with the choicest imployments.*] It is a pretty observation of some *Rabbins* upon *Levit*. 1. 14. that the Lord will  
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admit *turtles* for a sacrifice at any age, but *pigeons* it is expressly required that they be young; and they give this reason, because *turtles* are laboury meat at any age, but *pigeons* when they grow old grow *tough* and ill-relished. Truly friends, we are not born *turtles*, (for such are only Christs sanctified ones, *Pfat.* 74. 19.) we are *pigeons*. Let us remember that there is no acceptable relish in old pigeons, See 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. God promiseth such especial mercie, *Prov.* 8. 17.

2. There is none of you but is old enough to die, and old enough to be *damn'd*. *Rom.* 5. 14. Therefore it concerns you to get the knowledge of the way of salvation early. You early contrive how you shall live in this world, and are contented upon that account to learn a Trade, because you know not how soon you may be left to your selves, Oh be as wise for your souls!

3. This is the *learning-age*: If ever you will know the things of God it must be now; hereafter when you come into the world, you will plead multitudes of employments to divert you, you wil not be able to find time to learn: Now you have no affaires of your own to put these more weighty ones out of your heads, you have not the temptation of shame to acknowledg your ignorance; (and this to those of grown age is a great enemy to learning, especially in this way; they are ashamed now to learn, least they should confesse they have been ignorant so long.)

4. You can never make any regular profit of the publick *hearing* (nay very little of private *reading*) of the Word without the help of Catechism. As for *preaching*, Catechism-points are the

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the tools by the help whereof a Minister makes Sermons, and people understand them. Can you understand a discourse concerning any trade, and yet be altogether ignorant of the names and nature of the tools that are used in it? and as for reading, you will be able to make little use of that also, except you can reduce what you read to some Methodical head, or other of Divinity, which you must be beholden to Catechisms for.

5. Nay further, some of the Ancients have censured the ignorance of Catechisme very highly. *Clemens Alexandinus*, (the great Catechist in the famous Church of *Alexandria*, whence he hath his title) saies roundly *οὐκ ἐστὶ πιστεύουσαι ἀνεύχρηστοις*. That there is no believing without Catechism-principles: And a whole Council determined many years since, that those are not worthy the name of Christians that are not acquainted with Catechism.

*Aquis.  
Concil.  
Can. 14.*

6. The condemnation that lights upon any of you at the last day for wilful ignorance will be an heavy condemnation. Read and tremble (you of *Reading* at the fearful place *Mat. 10. 15*. If it be (even under temporal evils) so sad an aggravation, to consider that a man hath hated instruction, and not obeyed the voice of his Teachers, nor inclined his ear to them that instructed him (as it seems it is by *Solomon*, *Prov. 5. 12.*) how much more aggravating will it be to thee hereafter in *hell*, to consider that thou didst once live in a family where Catechizing & other exercises of family-religion were in use, that thou hadst thy abode in a town where thou didst, or mightest at least, hear a publick Catechism every Lords day; and yet



yet thou didst either *slothfully neglect*, or *maliciously hate* those pretious means which (by Gods blessing) might have kept thee from that place of torment.?

7. This is found (by experience) the most *profitable and compendious way* of teaching all *Arts and Sciences*, to draw the principles of them into short *Systemes and Tables*, and the Tutor to read Lectures upon them, and take an account of his Scholars how they understand them. If you put a child to learn English, he must begin with his A B C and the Teacher must not only take the book and read a lesson to the child about the letters, but examine him *which is which*, if he will have him expert in so trivial a thing as an *Horn-book*. Catechisms are such an A B C without which you cannot *spell* any sound Divinity; and if you do ~~not~~ take the same course in them, with young novices, we may preach to them while we will, to little purpose; and they hear, but to as little.

I V. The *impediments* to this duty I shall take notice of, and (by Gods help) take away in their order.

1. On the *Parents and Governours* part, who should present their little ones to this Ordinance, there are two scruples (slender ones, I must needs say, yet such as are strong enough to stumble slender Christians and especially take hold of such as are tainted with some principles of Anabaptism; but as small as they are, we will stoop to take them off.)

*Object.* And first it is *objected*, that if the children so catechized be very young, and not capable

ble of understanding this will prove of the Name of hereby misused a perjury

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2. This Ob the expresse W Timothy for even from his 3. 15.

3. This bo elder persons because there is profane those ter is to take a sufficient dis even those that at any time g ledgment of the

4. It is ver cried Hosanna 16, 17. unde likely) cried such for who under the nam

ble of understanding what they learn, and repeat, this will prove nothing but a meer *prophanation of the Name of God*, an Ordinance of his being hereby misused, whilst it is performed by rote in a perfunctory way.

*Ans.* To which I answer.

1. The *intellektuals* of some children are very *early ripe*, and some things in Religion are so plain, that they may easily be understood. The speeches that have dropt from some children at four, five, six years old, do sufficiently demonstrate how early some truths have been apprehended by the understandings, yea, and wrought upon the consciences of little ones.

2. This Objection seems to crosse leggs with the *expresse Word* of God, which commends *Timothy* for acquaintance with the Scriptures even from his long-coats and cradle, *2 Tim. 3. 15.*

3. This holds as strongly against *instructing elder persons known to be wicked and profane*, because there is more likelihood that they will profane those holy things. And yet no Minister is to take the profanenesse of his hearers as a sufficient discharge from his duty, in *instructing even those that oppose themselves, to see if God will at any time give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth*, *2 Tim. 2. 25.*

4. It is very unlikely, that *those children* who cryed *Hosanna* to our Saviour Christ, *Mar. 21. 16, 17.* *understood* what they cryed, but (it is likely) cryed with the multitude; for they were such for whom our Saviour makes an *Apology* under the name of *babes and sucklings*, and yet he

*Long coats  
and cradle*



received and justified them in so doing. Had our Saviour been of the objectors minde, he would have *blamed* them with the Pharisees, rather than *justified* them.

5. There is more danger of their prophana-  
tion of the Name of God for want of instructi-  
on. We should not (I believe) hear so many  
*oaths*, and *curses*, and *idle exclamations* upon  
the *Name of the Lord*, as we daily do, (even from  
those that can scarce *speak* or *goe* alone) were  
they taught betimes that these things are wicked  
and sinful. They might be kept from these pro-  
*ane practises* very early by the fear of *hell*, as  
well as from *crying*, by *bug-beares*, &c. did men  
possesse them as early with *true* feares, as they do  
with *vain* ones.

6. A little, a very little understanding will  
render a *duty passable* and *currant* from a little  
one, when a greater measure will not suffice to  
the performances of *elder* persons. We our selves  
indulge a great many childish faylings in the  
duty we expect from our little children, which  
we will not alike beare withal from greater  
boyes. And God *accepting according to what we*  
*have*, and *not according to what we have not*,  
gives us sufficient ground to believe he walks by  
the same rule.

7. What they learn then, though but by rote,  
may *stick in their memories*, and *work upon their*  
*consciencs* many years after. And how knowest  
thou, O man, but the light thou didst kindle in  
the mind of thy child, may be *renewing*, at least  
*restraining* light to him many yeares after thou  
art gone?

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*Object.* It is farther objected, That *our way of catechizing* is a *form*, the asking of some set Questions, and receiving set Answers to them; and the Objectors think all *Forms* unlawful.

*Ans.* 1. But what think these men of a *Form of sound words* 2 Tim 1 13. is that also unlawful? and if it be not, then either our forms of Catechism-Questions and Answers must be made up of *unsound words* (which if they say, they must prove too) or else, that they are a form, will no way (to the judgment of Gods Spirit) prejudice them.

2. So were the *ten commandments*, Deut. 6. 6, 7. and yet God commands the Jews, to teach them their children, & whet them diligently upon them. Surely we need not fear teaching our children the *ten Commandments*, when God himself appoints them their *Lesson*, we that are but his *ushers*, may safely require their learning it.

3. That our Catechismes are thus a form, doth most answer *one main end of Catechizing*, which is to teach men and women from their infancy to think and speak the *same things*, which is necessary in a well-ordered Church; those persons being much endangered to lose *orthodox notions*, who are ignorant of *orthodox expressions*.

And thus much shall serve to answer the *elder children* in their weak objections, I mean those *parents* who throw away the Ordinance of God upon such *childish* exceptions.

I now come to remove the hinderances on the behalfe of the *younger ones*, by which they are scared from giving their due attendance here-upon.



*Object.* And first *Shamefacednesse* is pleaded by some, who pretend they can, and would willingly answer in *private*, but they have not confidence enough to appear in *publick*.

*Ans.* 1. Art thou indeed shame-faced? the more need hast thou *resolutely* to undertake the work, by how much thou hast beyond others a *temptation* in thy very *constitution* against it. One part of our spiritual watchfulness, and daily mortification, consists in finding out, and overcoming *constitution-sins*.

2. Many that pretend *Shamefacednesse* in doing good, quickly enough grow *past shame* in doing *evil*; and 'tis natural to most men by means of original corruption, to blush more in doing their *duty*, then in acting *sin*.

3 *Shame* belongs to *sin*; shame and sin were both born into the world in a day. *Adam* knew no *shame* til sin had made him *naked*, shame of duty is a sinfull shame. If this be an Ordinance of Christ (as I have proved it is) then to be ashamed of it, will (I doubt) appeare a *deniall of Christ* (in a sort) at the last day; for being *ashamed of Christ*, i. e. in any truth, duty, or way of his, is so interpreted (*Mat. 10. 33. Mark 8. 38* compared) and then take heed lest Christ be *ashamed of thee before God the Father, and his holy Angels*.

4. Thou art offended thou art call'd upon for a *publick account*. But consider,

1. That many *elder persons* may learn by this mean, who are not able to read at home.

2. That those that *can*, and *do not*, may by thy readinesse be ashamed into some endeavours, lest they

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they be out-gone by children in so necessary and weighty a knowledge.

3. That thou wilt one day have occasion to claim the *priviledge of Communion* with the Church in higher Ordinances; and canst thou think it reasonable that the Church should give thee *the right hand of fellowship*, who hast by no publick satisfactory evidence declared thy self to be a Christian? It may be they know thou art baptized, but (for any thing farther that they know of thee) thou maist have renounced thy Baptism and Christianity, before thou comest to claime those priviledges, and accountest them meer matters of forme, as too many now do.

*Obj. ct.* A second objection of some is this; They shall be *single* in reviving an *unusual exercise*, they shall be *gazed* upon and *laught* at by their fellows, who out of profane principles keep away.

*Ans. w.* To which I answer.

1. But *child*, consider; Thou shouldst not be discouraged in the way to heaven, though thou walk it *alone*; will it be any trouble to a man when he is gotten thither, that he had no company upon the way?

2. 'Tis a great *honour to be alone in a good way*, nay, the greatest honour that can be, to forsake all *company* for *Christ* and *duties* sake. One *Lot* in *Sodome*, one *Noah* in the old world, kept up the fear and service of God, and see how Scripture honours them for it; so *Elij. h* (to his seeming) was the only man left that owned the truth of God in *Ahabs* dayes, and yet he was not discouraged for want of Company.



3. The men of this world are not discouraged but encouraged rather, if they drive the *only trade* in their profession, in the places wherein they live: men are willing to *grow rich alone*, and why not to grow *rich in grace* and *saving knowledge* alone?

4. It may be thou needest not goe *alone*: if thou hadst once begun, others by thy example may be induced to follow; they are loath to *begin*, as well as thou; they do not so much doubt they shall be *alone*, as draw back from being *first*. Now if thou canst in a good way be a leader to others, it is far more honourable.

5. Thou art affraid thou shalt be *gazed upon* & *laught at*; but consider, that it is the usual lot of the *best* to be so *hādled*; so in *Isaias* time the Saints were looked on as *signes and wonders*. *Isa. 8. 18.*

6. 'Twill be a more grievous thing to *them* to be (one day) *laught at by God*, then it is now to *you* to be *laughed at by them*; and this will hereafter return into their bosomes, *Pro. 1. 26. & 3. 34.*

7. Use the means, and get the *start* of them in saving knowledge, and thou wilt discern them to be far more *ridiculous*.

*Object* It may be thou mayest object, that thou art competently *grown in years*, thou lookest towards *man* or *woman*, and this is an exercise that is more proper for *litle children*.

*Ans. 1.* Alas! how many be there that think it too *childish* a thing to be *catechized*, who by the help of that Ordinance, are out-stripped in *knowledge* by those *children* whom they condemn!

2. If thy *knowledge* be not *proportionable* to thy *age* & *growth*, thou art yet a *child in understanding*, and hast more cause to be ashamed thereof, then

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then of any means wherein thou mayest be improved therein.

3. Look upon the *examples* before urged, of the *primitive Fathers*, who continued under this Ordinance for divers years after they had attained to mans estate, and thought it no discredit to stand among the *catechized*, till they were called forth to be *teachers* of others.

4. Take heed of *pride and self-conceit*, there being no greater enemy to the attainment of spiritual knowledge, then a conceit that men have attained enough already, *Prov. 26. 12.*

Thus have I answered the most common and ordinary objections, and excuses upon which this useful Ordinance, in these dayes of liberty is laid aside. The Lord grant that these plain lines may so far prevail (through his blessing) for the restitution thereof to this Church and Nation; that instead of that *notional brain-knowledge*, so much in fashion, we may see a *practical heart-knowledge* advanced, and that with so much improvement in old and young, that it may *cover the Land as the waters cover the Sea*, until we all arrive at that perfection *truly*, which some *groundlessly* conceit they have attained already, that we shall need no more to *speak every one to his neighbour, and to his brother, saying, know the Lord; but that all may know him from the greatest to the least, being all taught of God.* Amen.

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*REPRESENTED*  
In a **SERMON** at the Assizes  
held at *Reading*, for the Coun-  
ty of *Berks*, Feb. 28. 1653.

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By **SIMON FORD**, B. D. and Pastor of the  
Congregation at *S<sup>t</sup>. Laurence Church*  
in the said Town.

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*Published*  
At the joynt desire of the High Sheriff, and Ju-  
stices of Peace for the said County, which (with  
some mis-reports since blown about concern-  
ing it, and the Author) inclined him to give  
way thereunto.

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The third Edition.

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London, Printed by T. M. for *John Rothwel* at the Fountain  
and Bear in Gold-Smiths Row in Cheap-side. 1656.





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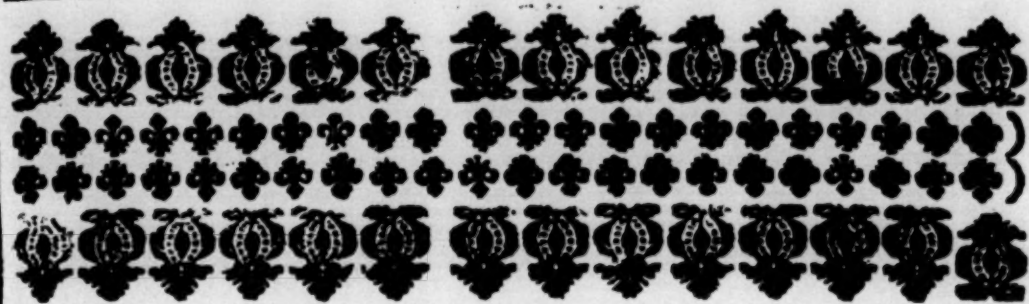
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TO

The Honourable, Judge ATKINS,  
one of the Justices of the Com-  
mon-Plea's; as also to the right  
Worshipful WILLIAM BACK-  
HOUSE of *Swallowfield*, Esq; High  
Sheriff of the County of *Berks*;  
together with the right Wor-  
shipful, the Gentry, both of, and  
out of the Commission for the  
Peace of the said County; and  
principally to those, at whose re-  
quest this Sermon was made  
publick.

My Lord, and Gentlemen,

**T**His Sermon having adventured it  
self upon the hazardous Tryall of  
God and the Bench, was adjudged  
to the Press, when its Authour was  
not by to plead on his own behalf; who surely had  
been privy to the Judgement, (which was only  
repor-



## The Epistle Dedicatory.

reported to him by some few of the number) would have intreated the Gentlemen not to adventure the reputation of their discretions upon a piece too unworthy the notice of such an Honorable Judicature.

I confess I look upon the comming under the Stationers Presse, in these dayes, as a punishment to a Sermon, no less (in its kind) then that of the same denomination, which you in some cases inflict upon offenders; seeing it is thereby exposed to the weight of publick calumnies and reproaches, of which I am sure mine shall not want its sufficient load.

The only remedy I have herein, is once more to present its case before you its Judges, (which I doe in this Dedication) and to intreat you that the Grand-Inquest you impanel to enquire concerning it, may be so wise as to understand the evidence of Truth that is in it; and so honest, as not to return an Ignoramus, for Billa vera.

Surely, (My Lord, and Gentlemen) you that are sufficiently acquainted with the Yerburies, Chillenden's, Ives's, and others of an inferiour Order, whom it would be too much honor to name seedsmen of the Devil, with whom this poor Town hath been perpetually pestered and poysoned, will, I doubt not, see cause for that tartness of application in the close, for which I have been sufficiently persecuted by the tongues of those, who found their backs too tender to be rubbed.

Those mens names, and some of the Errors and Heresies they vented, I represented to your last Grand-jury, and hoped they also would have seen cause either to have reported them to your Lordship, and the Bench, or at least not to have misrepresented me, (as some of them did) to others, as unable to justifie my charge.

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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

My Lord, and Gentlemen, *I commit the Vindication of my name, and of this Truth, first to God, who (I am sufficiently assured) will bring forth its righteousness as the light; and (among men) to your wiser, and more impartial judgements, hoping that you will (as far as it concerns you) impress the substance of it upon your Consciences, and walkings. And I pray that that Edition may be correctior & emendatior, more perfect then the Original Copy it self: that you may Live Sermons better then I can Preach or Print them. And upon that account, I will preach and print as often as you please; upon other terms I care not how seldom. And this, because I am*

( My Lord, and Gentlemen, )

Your most zealously affectionate well-wisher, and (upon that account) servant in the Gospel,

SIMON FORD.

Reading,

May 24. 1654.





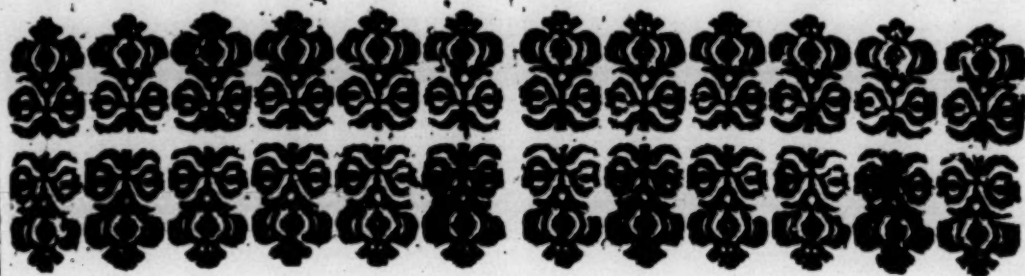
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S E R M O N

Preached at the *Affizes* holden for  
the County of *Berks* at *Reading*, Feb.

28. 1653. Mr. WILLIAM BACK-  
HOUSE of *Swallowfield*,  
S H E R I E F.

PSAL. 75. 4, 5, 6, 7.

I said (or rather, I will say) to the fools, deal not foolishly:  
and to the wicked, lift not up the horn, v. 4.

Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck,  
v. 5.

For promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the  
West, nor from the South, v. 6.

But God is the Judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up a-  
nother, v. 7.

His Psalm is a good Magistrates Di-  
rectory, because it is the Copy of  
that Kings heart, who was a man  
after Gods own heart. *David*  
at the time of the writing hereof,  
is by most sound Interpreters supposed to  
have been in that Morning Twilight of Royalty,  
a midling condition between a King and no King,  
which



which you have described, 2 Sam. 2. and 3. Chapters. *Ishbosheth* the Son and heir of *Saul*, the late King, was yet struggling for ten parts in twelve of the whole Kingdome: 'Twas an hot dispute of two years continuance. But at last, *David's* house grows stronger and stronger, and *Ishbosheth's* weaker and weaker, chap. 3. 1. This day-star of approaching Royalty, being thus got above the Horizon, and fore-telling the nearness of the Sun to dispel the mists of his long doubts and fears, (it is supposed) lets *David's* harp and heart in tune; and thereupon he takes occasion to testifie his thankfulnesse in this *ὀνίνιον ἐυχαισικόν*, or triumphant thankful Ode. His thankfulnesse is partly *Verbal*, in the acknowledgement of Gods faithfulness, in so near an issue of an expected mercy, (for this he means by the *nearness of Gods name*, v. 1.) and of his Sovereign Power and Justice, in the way wherein he accomplished it, ver. 7, 8, 9. And partly *Real*, in the resolvednesse of his heart, to repair the breaches and ruins of *Saul's* dissolute Government. The whole State, both *Ecclasiastical* and *Civil*, was like a melted Vessel, run into a lump of confusion and disorder, (for that is the Original emphasis of that phrase, *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved*, v. 3.) and there was no hope that ever it would be a Vessel for honour or use any more, except a skilful Founder undertook to new-cast it. Such an one was *David*, and that he might give assurance of his undertaking, he before-hand declares the mould or model unto which he will reduce it.

1. He will first cement the broken pieces of the old

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Dissolutus  
liquefactus  
fuit.

old frames, viz. Religion, Law, and Justice, which are the pillars of all Government.

2. He will secure those pillars from the insolent petulancy of bold & presumptuous offenders, by a severe execution of the utmost severity and rigour of divine and human Laws upon them. And both these he will do upon the consideration of his conscientious obligation thereunto; and that upon this account, because all his power is confessedly subordinate to Gods, which is the sum of my Text, and the following verses.

*I will say* (for so I read it with *Paræus* and *Musculus*) *unto the fools, deal not so foolishly, &c.*

*For promotion cometh, &c.*

In which words you have two general parts:

1. *Davids resolution of reformation, I will say, &c.*
2. The reason of that resolution, *For promotion, &c.*

In the first of these, you may further observe,  
1. The Subjects of it, *Fools*, (that is, bad men, but such whose sins are only prejudicial to themselves) and *wicked men*, such who by reason of long remisseness of Civil Government, during the unquiet and turbulent reign of *Saul*, were grown to a great height of presumption and violence, daring all Laws both divine and humane, out of countenance, which he expresseth by two phrases, Speaking with a stiff neck, & Lifting up the horn, Metaphors taken from unbroken Colts, or wild Bulls, who are altogether impatient of the bridle or the yoke. Sons of *Belial*, indeed, if the received Etymology of that word hold water. These are the persons that *David* intends to

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deal

הוללים  
boasting  
fools;  
רשעים  
trouble-  
some fools.

בלי-על  
cui non est  
jugum.



Musculus.

deal withal in this resolved reformation

2. The nature of it, and that is by way of restraint upon their unruly lusts: for this saying implies doing. *De merita vindicta & coercione intelligendum est*, one sayes; *Cohibebo* (sayes another) *petulantes regni & ecclesie perturbatores*. Zealous and resolute Authority useth not to speak vain words. This saying is like that *Psal.* 2. 5. where God is said to speak to such another generation of wild Beasts: but how? so, as to vex them in his sore displeasure. So here, *I will say to the fools, &c.* is as much, as *I will by wholesome Laws, and a zealous execution of them, either amend their persons, or (at least) restrain their lusts.* If they will deal foolishly, they shall not deal so foolishly, and if they will wear horns still, yet they shall not lift the horn on high.

2. The second general part may look two ways:

1. Either as a reason prevailing with David thus to put forth his power to curb the insolencies of wicked men. *For promotion* (i. e. my promotion, by which I am advanced to the succession of *Sauls* Throne) *cometh, &c.*

2. Or as a lesson which he would by just severity teach them, who had sinned themselves into a neer affinity to Atheism, by so long and uncontrolled a liberty of lust, and insolencies. *Just severity in Deputy gods may teach men so much Religion, as that there is a God that judgeth the earth.*

But I rather look upon it as a motive to David himself. And then the Argument runs thus: I was a while since, a poor Shepherds boy, and I

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am now advanced to the *potentia proxima* of an absolute Royalty. Therefore it concernes me gratefully to acknowledge, and zealously to act for him that advanced me, and (*seeing promotion comes not from the East, &c. But God is the Judge, &c.*) I will answer his ends in my advancement.

This part hath two branches :

1. A *negation of power* in any creature to give or take away honour and power. Though all assistance from all quarters of the world should concenter their endeavours for one mans exaltation, they could not do it, If God will pull him down; and *è contra*. Though the whole *posse* of the Creation were raised to pull a man down, yet if God say nay, their endeavours shall be successelesse.

*David* here takes his expressions from the Topography of the Land of *Palestine*, and expresseth *East* and *West* distinctly, but includes *North* and *South*, both under the expression of *midbar*, the *Desart*, that Country being on both *North* and *South* sides bounded with wast lands of that denomination. Whence your *Margin* reads it *Desart*, and your English meter, *forsaken wilderness*.

2. An *assertion of that power and prerogative in God alone*. *He is Judge*, i. e. absolute, and independent, in so much that he is no way taxable, though he puts in and puts out, lifts up, and pulls down according to his own good pleasure; And yet proceeds in a way of regular justice in this case of humane mal-administration, *As a Judge*.

Thus you see I have done this part of my task, i. e. taken to pieces this excellent *watch*, and shewed you the *wheels*, and the *spring*, *Davids* reformation, and the *impulsive cause* of it. But the



the harder part of my business is yet to come, *viz.* to put it together again, that you may take direction from *its hand* in the business of so solemn a convention, as is that which hath brought you hither this day.

I know the *spring-wheel* should first be taken in hand, as the foundation must be laid before the building, in an exact order of nature. But the order I shall proceed by is Theological, and therefore I shall first begin with the Balance, *Dauids* resolution of a just reformation, and then annex the reason (as the *spring*) at the last, to set it agoing.

And first and foremost, we will consider,

The subjects of this reformation. *I said unto the [fools.] and to the [wicked.]* Such then *David* found, even among the great ones, when he came to the Kingdom; he found beasts, and those armed with power, horned beasts. And such there will be every where, let the Laws be but a while silenced, and the Magistrate, either sleep, or connive, or both. Observe,

*Evils not suppressed, will be spreading Evils.* The case of such a *Common-wealth* wil quickly be like the field of the sluggard, described *Pro. 24. 31* all grown over with thorns, and nettles will cover the face thereof, (for ill weeds grow apace) and the wall of order and discipline will quite be broken down. There had need be diligent weeders to keep the field of a *Common-wealth* from being over-spread. They had need be good hedges, that must keep in such unruly beasts, as my Text speaks of. If there be none to forbid the fools to deal foolishly. there need be none to bid them do so; he bids them, that, when he can, doth not forbid them.

*Qui non  
prohibet  
peccare  
cum possit,  
ju. ci. Sen*

them. Men (in a spiritual sense) are all *natural fools*, *folly is bound up in the heart of a child*, Pro. 22. 15. and they need not be *taught that trade*; if they be but permitted to *set up* for themselves, he had need be a wiser man then ordinary that shall keep them within any bounds of reason or conscience; for, Observe again,

*Wickedness tolerated will grow insolent.* Such fools, if the rod of correction do not discipline them, will know no difference between simple folly and down-right madness. The *Asses colt* will turn his *ears* into *horns*, and grow *horn-mad*, and push against all those that shall endeavour to bring him under the yoke. *Sin and Error lose nothing by indulgence.* If a logg be King, the frogs will quickly be presumptuously petulant, and insult over its sluggishnesse. A Magistrate *couchant* will quickly make offenders *rampant*. We use to say, when an horse runs away with a yong rider, *he knows who is upon the back of him.* The weakness or unskilfulness of the hand that manageth him, is a provocation to him to attempt the casting off his burthen. There is nothing which is more intolerable *then a servant when he reigns.* if *Solomon* may be believed, Pro. 30. 22. When those base lusts of men that under restraint seemed very submisse, are once set at liberty, they will rage the more intolerably; and much, out of anger they have been bridled.

*Two things* there were in *Sauls* Government, and the interval of *David*, that exposed the Land to these wild beasts, and their insolencies, which among the rest of the causes are (like *Saul* himself among the people) higher by the shoulders.



1. *A perpetual Militia.* Wars Forain and Civil, defensive and offensive. And those (though never so necessary) like ill Physick, breed more ill humors, then they purge out. All Civil Authority must be silent, while the ratling of Arms drowns its voice; and the sword of the Law must submit to the Law of the sword. Thence the Souldiers in *Plutarch* wondred that any one should read Law to them that wore it by their side, & πάλαιθεν ἡμῖν ὡς ἀσπίδος ἔϊον, νόμους ἀναγιγνώσκοντες; War (in a sort) necessitates irregularities, not only against Civil, but even Military Laws. *Martial Law*, (saith one) is as great a Solœcism, as *Martial Peace*.

Thence, when God threatneth war to his people, he tells them, that Military Insolency shall cast contempt upon Civil Magistracy, *they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek, Mich. 5. 1.* And when he calls for that Judgment upon a people, he is said to invite the *beasts of the field to devoure*, Isa. 56. 9. There is a kind of *customary ferity* bred in the minds of men, by constant and familiar converse with instruments of death and violence, which will not easily be charmed into a peaceable submission to civil restraints, though the most discreet Magistrate *charm never so wisely*. Far be it from me, to asperse the persons of any of that profession among us. I can truly say of divers of them, what *Tertullus* said flatteringly, concerning *Felix* the Governour of *Judea*, *by them we enjoy great quietnesse*, which we cannot but accept alwayes, and in all places with much thankfulness, *Act. 24. 2, 3.* But I speak of the influences of that profession upon the generality of

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of those that professe it, and the people living under the exercise of it. *Militaribus animis* (sayes *Salust*) *adhibenda fomenta ut pacem ferre velint*. I dare say, your Lordships experience can testifie, that most of those that make a trade of the highway, are the reliques of routed and disbanded Forces, (who like the unjust Steward) *cannot dig, and to beg are ashamed*, and therefore follow that trade.

2. *The maintaining of a faction opposite to the faithful Prophets and Priests of the Lord.* Samuel for many years before *Sauls* death was laid aside, as a man of too rigid a spirit for *Sauls* designs; and *Abimelech* and the Priests were looked upon as confederate with *David*, and upon the information of a treacherous *Doeg*, murdered upon suspicion thereof. And no wonder, if they that are grown so bold, as to trample upon the Embassadors of God, make as bold with the Laws and Ordinances of man. I am sure, in Gods just judgment, *Civil confusions* have used to accompany *Church-confusions*; when *Judah* in *Abijahs* time was *without a teaching Priest*, they were also *without peace*, they went *in and out* of their own houses with hazard of their lives, *2 Chro. 15. 3*. I am glad, we of this Nation are at last grown so wise as to see, that *Church-Levelling* needs nothing but a power to its will to introduce *State-Levelling* too; and that the *Honourable Robes* of Magistracy and Law are at the bar of many mens ignorant and sottish fury, no lesse guilty of Antichristianism, then the *contemptible black coats* of the Ministry of the Gospel. Assure your selves, My Lord, and you of the worshipful Bench, that



'tis only the awe of conscience that subdues the fury, and rage of mens lusts; your Provisions of Law are a *lower bank*, which these violent waves will quickly break over, when once they swell above those sacred *main banks* of Religious Principles and Institutions. *Let Magistrates maintain Gods Ordinances, God will theirs.*

In this case *David* found the Kingdom, a kind of wilderness of wild beasts. And therefore we need not wonder at his *resolution* of a severe reformation, of setting the nets, and toils of good Laws to take them, (my next head which now comes to hand.)

*I will say unto the fools, &c. Observe, Insolent offenders must be curbed with a resolute severity.* All diseases (say Physicians of greatest note) are cured by contraries. And (by consequence) the diseases of the body Politick, occasioned by remissness, require more rough and churlish Physick to remove them. *Ne corporis quidem morbos, veteres, & diu auctos nisi per dura & aspera coerceas: corruptus, & corrumpens, eger & flagrans animus haud levioribus remediis restringendus est, quam libidinibus ardescit, faves Tacitus.* Stiff-necked Colts will not be managed with a slack rein. Let *David* come to the Throne with never so much resolution, yet he will find enough to do when he comes to act that resolution. He will find cause to complain that the sons of *Zerviah* are too strong for him, 2 Sam. 3. 39. Wherefore he is fain to die in their debt, and to leave it upon his Son *Solomon* to discharge, 1 Kin. 2. 5. And when he goes out of the world, his last words back his first resolution, 2 Sam. 23. 6, 7. *But the sons of Belial shall*

shall be all of them as thorns thrust away (i. e. out of the Kingdome, or the world, with force, and violence,) because they cannot be taken with hands. (There is no handling them in a gentle way) But the man that shall touch them, must be fenced with Iron, and the staffe of a spear; and they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the place.

In such cases, a Magistrate had need to sharpen the sword of Justice with the file of resolution; *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*. Come what will or can come, he must be armed against it with a fixed purpose of getting the enemies ground, or dying upon his own: of gaining the horse, or losing the saddle, sawing off the horns of these wilde beasts, or being gored by them. He must resolve to be the *Champion* of Justice while he can, and when he can no longer be so, he must become her *Martyr*.

A Judges heart and his robes must be both dyed in grain, else the colour of the one, and the courage of the other will quickly fade. Good Ministers should have the Motto of *Aarons* Miter written upon their fore-heads, *Holinesse to the Lord*; and Magistrates should have written upon their hearts, what *Moses* had on his, *Resolution for the Lord*. This alone will fortifie a man against all mollifying considerations. Thus the Sons of *Levi* came armed to execute the vengeance of the Lord against Idolaters, *Dent. 33. 9.* compared with *Exod. 32. 26, 27, 28.*

But when doth *David* resolve to put these resolves in execution? Even as soon as the reins of government are put into his hand. As soon as he receives the *Congregation, v. 2.* And lest we should



should think this was the issue of some hasty thoughts, which upon better advice he would see cause not to stand to; you shall hear him back it in another Psalm, *I will early destroy all the wicked of the Land*, Psal. 101. ult. Observe, (from the time)

That *Magistrates reforming resolutions must be speedily and effectually prosecuted*. For,

1. Good resolutions will cool again, when they are off from the fire of a present good mood, if they be not speedily put in execution.

2. Delays in this case are dangerous; when the fire once gets to the house top, the least delay will quickly render it unquenchable. If a small Army be suffered to entrench, and victual themselves, a great strength will have enough to do to conquer them.

If the Sea break in upon a Land, it may be, at the first, a little labour will repair the bank; but if it be neglected but a few dayes, all the Country cannot turn it out again.

*Novi ego quod primò fuerat medicabile vulnus.*

*Neglectum longa damna tulisse mora.*

2 Tim. 2.

17.

Wickednesse will spread as a Gangrene, (and especially that which the Apostle speaks of in that place, Heresie) and toleration makes it incurable.

3. Opportunities and seasons of doing good, are not in our hands, but Gods. This is the ground of that advice of Mordecai to Hester, *Who knoweth but that thou art come to the Kingdome for such a time as this?* Hest. 4. 13.

And this leads me to the second general part of my Text, *the ground of Davids resolution*, [For promotion cometh neither from the East, &c.]

Which

Which words are an *universal negation* of creature-power in the managery of State-affairs, further then Gods Providence co-operates with it. *Men are apt to expect advancement from second causes.* *Politicians* use to have their Engines at work in all Quarters. Such correspondencies in the *East*, and such in the *West*, &c. And they are apt to conclude, if but such or such a designe take (one of many) that makes for their advantage. And when their plots are spoiled in one part, yet they maintain hope from another quarter of the world. And indeed, *This is the spring of all manner of irregular compliances*, with those from whom we expect furtherance in our designs, that we look upon them as our advancers. Thence (saith *Solomon*) *many seek the Rulers favour*, Pro. 29.26. and that with sordid and horrid encroachments upon the principles of ingenuity and conscience, licking up the very spittle of great ones, (as is reported of *Dionysius* his flatterers) and conforming to their very vices and imperfections, as is reported of *Alexanders* courtiers, that imitated his wry neck.

And in the late Kings Reign, in the encroachments upon the publick liberty by Ship-money and Monopolies, His Judges, (all but one or two that went with honour to their graves) perswaded him 'twas Law, and his Divines, 'twas Conscience. As if they had both been of the mind of *Cambyfes* his Councillors, who advising with them in a case of incestuous marriage, they told him all the Statute-Law of the Land was against him; but there was another Law, that the King might do what he would.

Now



Now the ready way to keep men from irregular courses for advancement, is to perswade them, (O that God would do it) that vain is the help of man. Trust not in Princes, nor in the son of man, (saith David) in whom there is no help, Psal. 146. 3.

And Cursed be he that maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. Creature-confidence is the mother of Apostacy, and defeatment, Jer. 17. 5, 6.

But where then is the spring of preferment? And from what Fountain doth it flow? The last part of my Text tells you, God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another. Of which in a few words, and then I shall dismiss you with a word or two by way of application to the present occasion. Observe hence,

All the Translations of Civil power in the world, are the effects of a Divine, and that, a just Providence. God works these changes, and that as a Judge, in a judicial way.

Psal. 78. 71

Judg. 6. 11

Isa. 41. 15

There is nothing in the world of more common observation, and less solemn and sanctified meditation, then the various turnings of the wheel of Providence. One while, a David taken from the Sheep-coat, from following the Ewes great with young, and advanced (in Homers phrase) εἰς ποιμένα λαῶν, to be a Shepherd of men, his Sheep-hook changed into a Scepter, and his seate of turf to a Royal throne. A Joseph from an imprisoned slave, made a Royal Favourite. A Gideon from a threshing-floor, raised to be a Saviour of Israel, and his threshing instrument of wood, changed into one of iron, to thresh the mountains, as God himself phraseth it. Hester, a poor captive

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tive maid, advanced to a royal bed, *Hest. 2.6, 17.* And in profane stories, a Dictator frō the Plough, and an Emperor from the hog-trough, a third from keeping the Cows, &c. And our *Hen. 8.* took his two great favourites, the one from the Slaughter-house, and the other from the Forge.

On the other side, *Adonibezek* a mighty Prince, made Fellow-Commoner with the Dogs; and *Nebuchadnezzar*, a mighty Conquerour, and one that lifted his horn to a great height, turned a grazing with the Oxen; and *Herod* in his most sumptuous apparel, and amidst the shouts and acclamations of his people, reduced from a conceited God, to be the most loathsome of men; a living carrion, arrested by the vilest of creatures, upon the suit of his affronted Creator. A great *Haman* feasted with the King one day, and made a feast for Crows the next, *Hest. 7.10.*

And in human stories, who knows not that one of the greatest Commanders in the world, was carried about in an Iron-grate, to be a foot-stool to an insulting Conqueror? That *Belisarius* the famousst General that the later age of the Roman Empire knew, and in greatest favour with *Justinian* his Prince, was reduced to that want, that he was fain to beg for his living, *Date obolum Belisario.* This is commonly the lot of great Favourites, *Fatum potentia raro sempiterna,* (sayes *Tacitus*) *quippe satias capit aut illos cum omnia tribuerunt, aut hos cum nihil reliquum est quod cupiant.* The common fate of worldly preferment, that it seldom lasts, Princes being either cloy'd with giving their favors, or subjects with receiving them, when they have no more to give, nor these to receive.

Judg. 1.7  
Dan. 4. 28

Act. 12. 23

Bajazet.

And



And in our dayes those changes and revolutions of the wheel of Providence have been ordinary.

We have seen in one *Royal Family*, (and that one of the most eminent in these parts of the world) a great and puissant Monarch, in the face of the Sun, at noon-day, at the gate of his own Palace, in the most populous City of these three Nations, in the midst of thousands of his passionate well-wishers, and zealous partizans, laying His head upon a fatal block; three Queens of his line and alliance, reduced to the Contribution of Foraigners, for a mean subsistence; and a numerous issue of the same Family, chrusht under the same wheel of Providence, in whom not many years since these Nations rejoyced, as the budding hopes of an uninterrupted succession.

We have seen a *Parliament*, the darling of the people, sitting under the protection of a perpetual Act, crumbled into pieces, and at last wholly dissolved with the *crucifige* of that very people, that a few years since cryed *Hosanna*, and prostrated their very hearts at their feet, to pave them a triumphant entrance into that trust they had elected them unto.

We have seen a formidable *Meteor of Policy* lately elevated to a great height of Confidence and presumption, *lifting up the horn on high*, or (as a learned Jew reads the words) *against the high God*, and *speaking with a stiff neck*, caught like *Abrahams Ram*, *by the horns in a bush*, and made a just sacrifice to the scorn and contempt of all men; & their *arms withered* in the very act, for stretching them out against the Prophets of the Lord.

R. Immanuel.

In

In a word, such changes of publick affairs, as if the stars, or those that pretend to great familiarity with them, had been but ordinary Prophets, they could not have overseen, without an inexcusable neglect. Such wonderful, and momentous Providences as all *Europe* is concerned in, should not, in my judgment, have been omitted among our Calculators, (who are at leisure to take abundant notice of (that far more inconsiderable thing) *the Clergy*) except possibly they calculated the Common-wealths Nativity upon black Munday \*, when they had not light enough to erect their Scheme. However at the present, let them passe with this *memento*, that it is not for vain man to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath kept in his own power; and that undoubtedly, God Almighty is better able to keep his own counsel, then to acquaint the Stars with such affairs, or at least their Secretaries, who make a livelihood of blabbing all that they know, and more too. But (to leave this digression.)

This is that great Truth, which Scripture so much inculcates upon men, that (it seems) are very slow of heart to believe it. How often doth God tell us this truth, in various forms of expressions? *That he raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy from the dunghil, that he may set him with Princes*, Psal. 113. 7. *That he poureth contempt upon Princes, and maketh them to wander in the wilderness*, whiles (on the other side) he setteth the poor on high, Psal. 107. 41, 42. that he raiseth the beggar from the dunghil, and maketh him to inherit the Crown of glory, because

\* The day of the great Eclipse 1652. concerning which our Stargazers prognosticated such monstrous darkness, but were confuted by the event. Acts 1. 7.

the



the pillars of the earth are his, 1 Sam. 2. 7, 8 that he cuts off the spirit of Princes, and is terrible to all the Kings of the earth, Psal. 76. 12.

Insomuch, that it seems wonderful to me, that (after so much clear conviction, both from Scripture and experience) the luster of present greatness should usually so blinde the eyes of great ones, and flatter them with a perswasion of immunity from these changes, as it doth. That their inward thought should still be, (that which this Psalmist notes, as a great foily) *That their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations*, Psal. 49. 11. That they conceit their mountaine to be so strong, that they shall never be moved, Psal. 30. 6, 7.

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That when men cast about all manner of ways for advancement, they should not so much as think of God; nay, that they should entertain an Atheistical conceit, that a consciencious walking with God, is the only way to spoil their preferment. (As if indeed that which Balack told Balaam, who was a little too nice for his design, were true, that the Lord keeps men from honour.) That he that will be great, must have a conscience as large as his designs, lest being too straight-laced, it cause miscarriage. That seeming good should be accounted a more ready road to greatness, then being so. Surely, did men believe God to be the Sovereign disposer of all preferments, they would in reason be able to conclude, that he would advance his own servants rather then others, if advancement be good for them. But because men do not cordially believe this Truth, therefore they neglect him, and prostitute their  
consci-

consciences to the base lusts of others. Inſomuch that a man would think, when he reads the ſto-  
ries of ſome great Politicians lives, that the Di-  
vel and they had ſtruck a bargain upon the terms  
which our Saviour reſuſed, *Luke 4. 6. All this  
power will I give thee, and the glory of theſe king-  
doms, for that is delivered to me, and to whomſo-  
ever I will, I give it. If therefore thou wilt wor-  
ſhip me, all ſhall be thine.* Or, that they had been  
bred with that great French Courtier, that choſe  
a part in *Paris*, before a part in *Paradiſe*. Or,  
Laſtly, that they had learned thoſe Heathen Poli-  
ticks of

*Flectere ſi nequeo ſuperos, Acheronta movebo ;*

And,

*Varo, reguſtatum digito terebrare ſalinum*

*Contentus perages. ſi vivere cum ſove tendis.*

Virg.

Pers.

How much better were it for men to keep Gods  
high-way to greatneſs, which though it may ſeem  
the farther way about to them that are in haſte, yet  
(conſidering, that he that maketh haſte to be rich  
cannot be innocent, as Solomon ſays, *Prov. 28. 20.*  
and that they that purchaſe the whole world with  
the loſs of their own ſouls, get nothing, when a  
dying conſcience caſts up their accounts, *Matth  
16. 26.*) it is the nearer way by far ; Eſpecially  
when we have Gods ſolemn engagement for it,  
that thoſe that honor him, he will honor, and they  
that deſpiſe him ſhall be ſleightly eſteemed, *1 Sam.  
2. 30.*

Laſtly, (conſidering this great Truth) I can-  
not but wonder at the ſpirit that thoſe men are  
of, who in ſuch changes, as fall out againſt the  
grain oft heir expectations, carry themſelves ra-

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ther like Atheists then Christians under them.

1. Sometimes in a pet at God himself, throwing off that mask of Religion, which they had hoped might have advantaged them; and because *this evil is from the Lord*, they are resolved to *wait upon him no longer*, like that wicked Prince, who is branded upon record for that ungodly resolution, 2 King. 6. 33. How many have all ages of the Church known, who because they could not obtain their designed greatness, by profession of Orthodoxy and Piety, have attempted to recover it by Apostacy and Persecution?

2. And sometimes in a furious and Diabolical rage, fuming and foming against the Instruments causing or occasioning them. How familiar a thing hath it been with our debaucht Gallantry in these late years, to drink healths to the confusion of this party, and that party, to curse, and devote to the Divil such and such men, as the Authors or Promoters of those events they storm at?

Not considering, that (as we say) *the Fox never fares better then when he is cursed*: nor, that the worst of men, in the worst actions, do but midwife Gods secret intendments: that the crucifying of the *Lord of glory*, was indeed the *pre-determined counsel of God*, Act. 4. 28. though the sin of that wicked act were the guilt of those that acted therein: nor that their own sins impower those Instruments, that thus thwart their designs; and that when God makes such changes, he doth it *as a Judge*, for the just punishment of those whom he afflicts thereby. Which opens a door to the last branch of this last part of the Text,

God

*God is the Judge.*

Whence observe.

*The greatest changes in the world are judicial acts of Gods Providence.* Not meer acts of Sovereignty, in which God acts by Prerogative, although it be his Prerogative sometimes so to act. Whence (although God use arguments from this Prerogative; to silence our cavils, in those great differences which he makes between one man and another; especially in relation to salvation and damnation, wherein the Apostles answer hath hitherto among serious and solid Christians, been judged satisfactory. *Hath not the Potter power over the clay; &c. Rom. 9. 12.* Nay, and even in State-changes he makes use of the same similitude, *Jer. 16. 8.* Yet,) he hath a rule of Justice which he commonly walks by in such dealings; and that not onely *that secret* will of his which makes things just, because he wills them; but also that revealed Law of righteousness, which he hath laid down in his Word. So that it may be truly said, (as to us and our demerits) that no man loseth honor or estate, but he that first forfeits it. If God cast out the *Canaanites*, & bring *Israel* in to tread upon the necks of their Kings, it is when their *iniquities are full*; and if God reject *Saul*, it is because he rejects God first; and if he makes the sons of *Eli* vile, it is because they *made themselves vile* and made his *sacrifice to be abhorred*. And even *Job* himself (though he were a singular example, and his abasement was rather a design to do him good, then a punishment for any notorious evil, yet) dares not plead his own innocency, except in the particulars which his friends

Gen. 15.  
16.

1 Sam.

15. 26.

1 Sam. 3.

13.



charged him withal, injustice and hypocrisie, *Job* 2. 14, 15.

But the causes of such Judgments are not always discernable to others, no, nor (it may be to the men themselves, that are the subjects of them, (though godly) and therefore (even to *Job* himself) it was good counsel that he should say to the Lord, *That which I see not, teach thou me, and, If I have done iniquity, I will do so no more,* *Job* 34. 31, 32.

Sometimes, they are the sins of the first Founders of a Family, that entail Forfeitures upon their posterity: As in the case of *Jehu*, who doing Gods work with a spirit of private revenge, cuts off the succession from his line after four generations, *2 Kings* 10 30. *Hos.* 1. v. 4.

And in the case of *Isbosheth*, whose Title to the Crown of *Israel* *Saul* forfeited, it may be before he was born, at least before he possessed it.

Sometimes, the sins of an immediate Parent, and he godly too, as in the case of *Eli* and his posterity, may entail an affliction. So in the case of *Solomon* and his posterity, the Kings of *Judah*. *Reboboam* lost ten Tribes for his Fathers sin, *1 King.* 11. 31.

Sometimes it is for the sins of the people, upon whom such changes have an influence. As when God saith in *Hos.* 13. 1. *I have given them Kings in mine anger, and have taken them away in my wrath.* See also *Isa.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.

And (in my judgement) this very consideration should move all persons under any employment,

ment, to lay out their utmost interests and abilities for God. The wheel of providence is perpetually turning the highest spokes will quickly be lower. He that put down some for male-administration, will (as he can) put down you, if you administer the affairs you are intrusted with-all as they did.

Surely *David* had often such thoughts. If *Saul* were cast off, because he spared where God bade him strike, because he permitted wickedness to range unbridled over the Nation and to lift up the horn on high; God will lay me aside too, if I follow his steps. Therefore *I will say*. &c.

It is that that concerns most of us seriously to consider.

As for the *Ministry*, God hath poured contempt upon them in an abundant measure; and truly, considering what a company of ignorant, sordid, sottish, lazy, Popish fellows, walk up and down in the garb of that profession, I wonder that error, and sacrilege, have proceeded no farther against them then they have. Can any expect, but God should forsake his Sanctuary, when the Priests make his *Sacrifices to be abhorred*?

For my part, I am as zealous for the Calling and Maintenance of the Ministry of *England*, as any that hears me can be. But I desire those of my brethren here present this day, to be perswaded, that whatever contempt hath been or may be poured upon that Reverend Calling, some of their own profession have occasionally been guilty of procuring to themselves, and the Profession it self.



And as for the Gentry, I believe there is scarce a Noble Family in the whole Nation at this time, but God hath, during these last troubles, brought under some disparagement, or diminution, or both.

For my part, I can say from my heart, that I have not a levelling spirit, and I think it a sad Judgement to a people, when *they that were brought up in scarlet imbrace dunghils, Lam. 4. 5.* God preserve civil distinctions in England.

But, O that God would give them hearts to consider the justice of his proceedings, in the severity of his dealing with them, and to examine themselves concerning the cause of it. Shall I help you a little to finde it out? Look upon the *great Charter, the Scripture-Patent*, by which (as to God) all men hold their honors, *1 Sam. 2. 30. Those that honor me, I will honor; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.* Have you not dishonored God the more, for the power he hath given you above others? God hath brought Nobility and Gentry low in England, and if they walk in the sins of their Families, which commonly have been, and yet are in most places, (a few onely excepted) *Pride, wantonness, drunkenness, wearing, gaming, and all maner of debauchery; oppressing their poor neighbors and Tenants; Simoniackal & Sacrilegious encroachment upon Church-maintenance, joyned with contempt of God, his Ministers, and Ordinances;* let them be assured God will bring them lower: he will reverse their Escucheons, break their swords, and cut off their spurs, and bring such a rot into their families, that their dwelling places shall know them no more.

Your,

Your hearts are ready to say (I know) as they did, when Christ told them, God would *take away his vineyard from them, and let it out to other husbandmen*; God forbid. And for my part, I heartily joyn with you in that Prayer, so Gods Honor and his Truth may be saved; otherwise, let all the Titles in the world go for me. Better the *pride of mans gicry* should be *stained*, then God any way disparaged. For a remedy of these evils, I beseech you, (Sirs) let my counsel be accepted of you. For Gods sake, and your own, and your posterities sake, *Get the true knowledge and the fear of God into your Families*; do not maintain a company of *Ruffians, Drunkards, Swearers, and unclean wretches in your Livery*; use them to *Reading, Prayer, Repetition of Sermons, those contemned exercises of true and real godliness*; ride abroad, and encourage honest Lectures, and bring your Tenants in by your example, who seldom go to Heaven or Hell, but as their Land-lords lead them; Get *Bibles and Catechisms, and Books of Practical Divinity*. as Perkins, Preston, Reynolds, Sibs, Bolton, Greenham, &c. into your houses, in stead of *Cards and Dice, and Tables*; restore (if it be to be known) what *Sacrilegious* bits any of your Ancestors have devoured; give more to a godly Minister to maintain him, then to a drunken Huntsman or Faulkoner; let not the Gospel be cheaper to you then your pleasures. Think not less Religion will carry a rich Gentleman to Heaven, then a poor laborer. Nay, I tell you he had need of more, if Christ may be believed, Mat. 19. 24. It is easier (saith he) for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle, then for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Luke 20.  
16.



If I am plainer with you then you desire, I pray forgive me this wrong, seeing I doe it for your good.

Salust.  
Bell.  
Fugurth.

My Apology for it is that of *Salust*, when he had ript open the vices of his times, *Bonum nulla ratio ledere potest; quippe vera, necesse est bene praeiacet, falsam illius vita moresque facile superant.*

And now the Publick Solemnity of this dayes meeting, calls for some particular addressees to those for whose sake I was called hither. And they shall be very brief, because I am loath to be your hinderance from your publick busineses.

Judge  
Atkins.

And first of all my businesse is to you, *My Lord* concerning whom, though I am a stranger to your face and acquaintance, yet the reputation you have among good men, where you are most known, emboldens me to say as the Apostle *Paul* in another case concerning the *Corinthians*, that *your forwardnesse of mind* is such, that it is *something superfluous* for me to exhort you: and let me add (from him also) thus much, that I hope you will *shew the prooffe of your love* to Religion and Justice, and of our *boasting on your behalf*. Only I beseech you to give me leave faithfully to represent to you the state of the Country you have now to do withall, that so your *forward mind* may have sufficient matter to work upon.

2 Cor. 9. 1

2 Cor. 8. 24

And first of all, (*my Lord*) as to Religion, I know not what we are, I am sure very few of us are what we should be. But for this little Town, where your present employment lies, I speak my thoughts freely, without spleen, or passion, that I verily perswade my self, if all *Augustines*, and

Epi-

*Epiphanius's* Catalogues of Heresies were lost, and all other ancient and modern Records in that kind, yet it were no hard matter to restore them with considerable enlargements from hence. We have Anabaptisme, Familisme, Socinianisme, Pelagianisme, Raunting, and now Quaking too (and what not ? ) and the Divel is served in Heterodox Assemblies as frequently as God in ours. \* There is one of the most eminent Church-Livings in this County possessed by a blasphemer; and one in whose house, I believe here be some can testifie, the Divel is visibly as familiar, as one of the family. And shall the *horns* of these beasts never be pared off by the Civil Magistrate? My Lord, I beseech you act, ( I know you will ) to the uttermost of your power to restrain these unruly beasts, and where you want power, represent that want to those that can bestow it; and I hope by this time they see need enough to do so themselves.

As for Civil Affaires, we have ( blessed bee God ) some among us, that would be zealous and faithful in the Offices they are intrusted withall, if they might be born out in so doing. We had the last Year a few active Officers, and no lesse then three or four vexatious suits, and some of them ( it may be ) may come before your Lordship this Assizes, commenced against them by notorious offenders, for pretended irregularity in some circumstances.

My Lord, you have one suite before you ( at the least ) from the issue whereof the whole Country will collect whether they may dare to do Justice, or no. Surely, if Humane Law-givers be like the Divine, no man should be punished

\* Since ejected; concerning whom there is lately a publick account given upon the evidence of sundry Oaths, as to both parts of this Charge, & that in Print, by a faithful hand. See *Dæmonium meridianum*.



shed for too much zeal in the execution of the Law.

1 Theff.  
5. 7.

My Lord, Drunkenness is grown more impudent among us, then it was in Saint Pauls time. And our Officers dare not meddle with a *Gentleman Drunkard*, for fear of an Action of Battery.

Neh. 13.  
11, 17, 25.

And for Sabbath-breakers; would God we had Magistrates among us of *Nehemiahs* temper, that would *contend with them*, and *lay hands* upon them too. I am in hope, a word from your Lordship would do much towards the execution of those Acts and Ordinances that concern that business. Here be insolent Robbers about the Countrey, almost every where; scarce a Gentlemen, or other able mans house round about this Town, but hath been assaulted, or threatned at least, and ('tis said) there is a *Corporation* of them. I hope Justice will make some of them free of the Hang-mans *Corporation*, for a terror to others.

As for you *Gentlemen*, that are of the *Commission of the peace*, I do somewhat please myself, that I can now call the most of you confidently by that name. We were like to have had (not long since) a *Linsey-wolsey Heterogeneous Bench*, such as the *Medley-Constitution* of those times would allow. And indeed it was not to be expected, but that those that endeavored the extirpation of the Ministry, to set up *Jeroboams Priests*, should discard the *Gentry*, and fill their seats with *John of Leydons Dukes*, both of the same stuff, the *meanest of the people*.

(Though I would not hereby disparage those whose known worth makes them esteemed in the

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the Countrey, who have the thing which first gave Nobility; and are as fit to begin a line of Honor to be continued to their posterity, as those from whom our present Gentry descend. But I conceive, that such mixtures, except very sparingly made, and that upon weighty considerations, much prejudice the esteem of Authority to the people.)

I beseech you, honored Sirs, do not think it enough to appear upon the Bench at Assizes, and general Sessions, but appoint frequent and standing Privy Sessions, to rectifie publick disorders in the Countrey upon the place, to put down *Ale-houses, the Divels Universities*, where men proceed Graduates in all manner of wickedness; to suppress Drunkenness, Swearing, Sabbath-breaking: and when inferior Officers present such offenders before you, do not tell them by your slight entertainment of them, that you are of *Gallio's* minde, and *care for none of those things*.

I have heard some Officers complain of late, that they are discouraged in that part of their office: they are zealous in taking hold of such offenders, and when they come to the Justice, he releaseth them. He that (having your power) does not cut off these Offenders *horns*, wears them, yea, and will push with them also in time. I never knew any Magistrate indulging any sin, but either he was guilty of it himself, or more then ordinarily inclined to it, had he suitable opportunity.

And you *Grand Inquest-men*, I am somewhat ignorant of your particular Function, but I conceive one main part of your business is, to make  
pre-



presentment of those grievances, wherein the Countrey whom you represent, needs redresse. And I hope you will not forget two things, which I think to be of great concernment: the one is, *want of Church-Government*, without which, Civil Government cannot be long preserved in a Christian Common-wealth. Church-levelling, and State-levelling, are twins; onely (like *Jacob* and *Esau*) the one rough and hairy, and not so apt to be dandled and made much of by the Magistrate, who usually is tender in such things as concern publick peace; but the other a more sweet babe, which under the notion of tendernesse of Conscience, and Christian Liberty, hath been the fondling of former Governors, until it had almost proved a *Jacob* a *Supplanter* indeed, by exchanging the *voice of Jacob*, for the *hands of Esau*.

The other is, *Liberty of Prophecying*, through the indulgence of former Powers, grown to such an height, that every whipping-boy, when he hath gotten an Heretical notion or two by the end, hath impudence enough to intrude into any Pulpit to vent it; or else to draw aside poor silly souls into corners, and infect them there without control. And some of them, though they usurp the *place of the Clergy*, yet if they should fall into your hands, would not be capable of the *priviledge of the Clergy*; and hang, for not being able to read.

Friends, for Gods sake, for the Gospels sake, for your poor souls sake, for your near relations sake, some of whom are in perpetual danger of being poisoned: Tell your superiours, as the voice  
of

## of Davids Government.

of all that love the welfare of *Jerusalem* in the County, that *nothing is so intolerable, as a boundless I oleration.*

You of both *Juries*, take heed to your Oaths and Consciencs, and remember that *he that condemneth the righteous, and he that acquitteth the wicked, are both an abomination to the Lord.* If any silly Cattel come before you, do not gratifie a malicious prosecutor, by saying their *eares* are *horns*; but where y<sup>e</sup> find *horns* indeed, and those *lifted up*, and such as have used to *push in time past*. you know the Law of God as well as man, allows you to return such *guilty*.

I had almost forgotten you, *Gentlemen of the Gown*, and it is wonder I should, when I spoke of *Levelling*. I honour your Profession, and therefore I will presume to adventure a little good counsel to your acceptance, without any other *fee*, then the testimony of a good *Conscience*, in the discharge of my duty. You know that Law is the *Sanctuary of a free subject*; for Gods sake, do not you be guilty of turning it into an *Inquisition-house*, where poor mens cases are so long stretched out upon the *rack* of needlesse delays, till both their purse-strings, and heart-strings crack. Surely, there is an evil report abroad concerning some of you, that you betray the *priviledges of this Sanctuary*; which makes many an honest man rather run all hazards, then flye thither for refuge. 'Tis said, some of you are like indented Pictures, which if you look on them several wayes, present you with several faces in one Table; such as can take on both hands, of one to speak, and of another to hold their peace,

or



or (as bad) to say nothing to the purpose. As Juries should not by verdict, so neither should Lawyers by pleading, turn *ears* into *horns*, and *horns* into *ears*, represent a man, or cause otherwise then they are.

I know not to whom to recommend the care of the *Prison* but to you all. I know it is the Sheriffs Prison, but I know not how far his power extends in the things that I am to move in order to its reformation. At most, Sheriffs are annual, and can take order but for their year; but you, my Lord, and the Bench, may reform for perpetuity.

For my part, I look upon Goals, as they are usually furnished with Keepers, as Houses of *Infection and looseness*, rather then houses (as they should be) of *correction and restraint*. I assure you, it hath saddened my soul to hear, when I have come in and out to see Prisoners, the poor Felons in the Dungeon ranting and roaring, as if they were resolved to walk by the Epicures principles, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die*. And I fear scarce any one comes within those walls, but he is made *ten times more the childe of the Devil* then he was before. O that you, my Lord and the Bench, would take some course that those poor Creatures that have not long to live, may be made fit to die, that they might be Catechized and Preached to. I hear there are places where the Prisons have a Preacher appointed and allowed upon the Sheriffs accounts. For God sake, my Lord, and Gentlemen, let something be done herein, that those you condemn to the *Gallows*, may not be sent to the *Devil* too.

Lastly,

1 Cor. 15.

32.

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Lastly. *you of the Countrey*, that have business with the Court, look to it, take heed of malice, perjury, and revenge. You that go to Law with one another, if for trifles, let fall your suits; the charges you put any one to in a vexatious suit, is so much money pickt out of his purse, and it may be so much necessary sustenance pluckt out of his poor wives and childrens bellies; if for matters of moment, and your cause be just, yet use mercy, charity, and moderation.

Lastly, let us all beseech the Lord, who is the *Judge of Judges*, as well as *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, that he will be with ours in the Judgement, that so (to close my Sermon with the close of my Psalm) *All the horns of the wicked may be cut off, but the horns of the righteous may be exalted.*

F I N I S.



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THE  
SECOND PART  
OF THE  
DIALOGUE  
CONCERNING  
The PRACTICAL Use  
OF  
INFANT-BAPTISM.

*Wherein*

Many things Dubiously expressed in the former Part,  
are Satisfactorily cleared; many heads slightly touched,  
are considerably enlarged; and many new hints seasonably Sug-  
gested to the Consideration of those, who had rather  
profitably improve, then *barrenly Dispute*, or *pro-  
phanely Dispute away*, so profitable  
an Ordinance.

By the same Authour.

LONDON,

Printed by T. Maxey, for John Rothwel, at the Fountain  
and Bear in Gold-Smiths Row in Cheape-side. 1656.



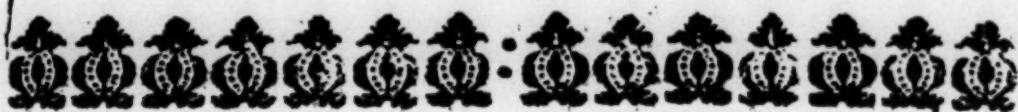


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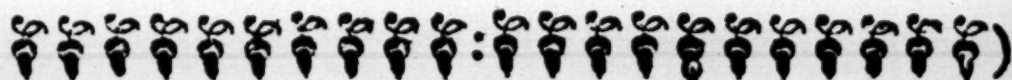
**T**Hese are to Advertise thee,  
That the Authour intends  
the Publication of a *short*  
*Catechism*, containing the Substance  
of *this*, and the *former* part, by way  
of Question and Answer; and that  
the said *Catechism* will be spee-  
dily Printed by it self: The Au-  
thor being willing, that those who  
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at large, might have the sum of  
both at a cheaper rate. And that  
these particular heads here enlar-  
ged, should be rendred useful to  
private Families; that those who

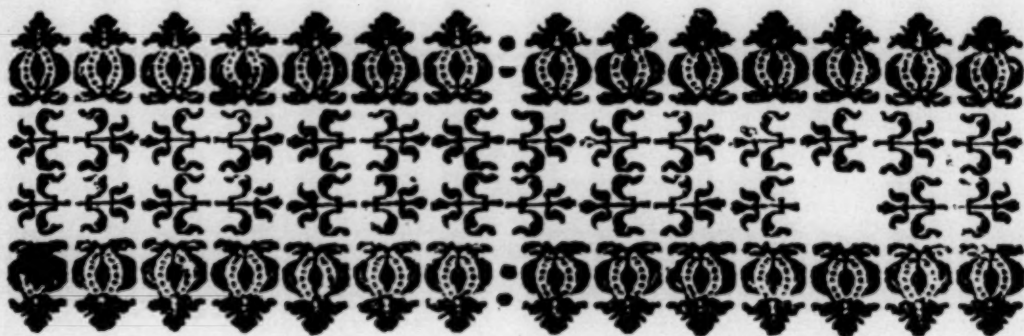


desire, to preserve their Families  
from the Infection of Anabap-  
tism, may have the advantage  
thereof, to Instruct their Children  
and Servants in the use of their  
Infant-Baptism, which by Gods  
blessing will be a very effectual  
Preservative against it.



THE





THE  
PRACTICAL Use  
OF  
*INFANT-BAPTISM.*

A  
SECOND  
DIALOGUE,  
BETWEEN  
{ POEDOBAPTISTA,  
and  
{ ASTRICUS.

IR, I blesse God, my last Discourse  
S with you, about the *Practical use of*  
*Infant-Baptism*, so Baptised me into  
your Principles, that (as to the main  
of your Discourse) I am not (by any thing which  
either mine own thoughts, or the Objections of  
A 3 others,

*Astric.*



others, to whom I have Communicated it, have suggested to me) any whit stumbled therein. And therefore I desire you will not Interpret my present *Second* addresse to you, as an Argument of my unsettlednesse in the Point then under debate; but only, as an expression of my farther desire, to have my understanding cleared in some passages, then delivered by you, concerning which, I have met with some dispute from others and some darknesse of apprehension in my self: And withall to give you the opportunity of confirming me in my present persuasion, by the addition of such new considerations, as possibly our farther Discourse may give you occasion of dilating your thoughts into. And therefore, I shall only take upon me the Perion of another therein, and Suggest to you, as well as I can, what Questions, and Objections I think a Christian of the growth in which your last discourse found me, would exercise you withall, or understand others are dissatisfied in.

*Pad -  
baptista.*

I assure you, *Neighbour*, you cannot more blesse God for the satisfaction, that slender discourse then gave you, then I desire to do; for that God made use of me as an happy Instrument to give it you. And I farther assure you, that your present visit is so much the more welcome to me, because it brings me the good news, that you are (without *Dipping*) of *Asterictus*, become *Serictus*, of an unsettled Christian in this point, a settled, and confirmed one. But seeing you will yet passe under your old name, acting *Aste.ictus* still, when you are another man I shall not mistake you for the party you resolve but to Personate.

nate. Only, I must warn you of one thing, that you will not (out of charity to your new persuasion) put forth lesse strength of opposition, or take easier satisfaction, in any thing in Dispute between us, then if you were really Mr. *Asterius* still.

I am very well pleased, *Sir*. that my *charge* yields you so much *content*, and my *name* so much *mirth*. And, (as to your Caution,) I shall assure you to do my best to find you more work; and I hope, God will effectually carry you through it, to do it to the purpose. And to encourage you therein, I assure you, upon mine own knowledge, that I am not the only man, upon whom your last Discourse hath had this effect: but some others, who were serious in their dissatisfactions, as I was, have, by the blessing of God, been reduced to the Practice of Infant-baptism, which they formerly forbore, as I did, because they knew not how to practice aright.

I scarce dare to hope, *Neighbour*, that any of my poor labours should return into my bosome, with so ample a reward, as the Reduction of any one straying Sheep, into the Fold of my Master, when I first bestowed that pains upon you. And when I saw what effect it had in your particular, I thought my self sufficiently apaid, in your satisfaction. And therefore (considering mine own slenderesse, which I my self best know) I should very much suspect the truth of this farther Intelligence, but that the experience I have of your Piety, assures me that you dare not lie, for *God glory*, much lesse for my *encouragement*. However, if any such successe hath (besides expecta-

*Aster.*

*Pæd.*



tion) followed my weak endeavours. I shall, I hope, sing from my heart the First verse of the 115. Psalm, *Not unto me, Lord, not unto me, but to thy Name be the praise.* Only, (because successe in a good way, is a providential Call to go on in it) I shall make so much use of it, as to proceed in the businesse in hand with so much the more encouragement, and Faith. And so, the Lord blesse our Discourse, and grant, that some farther Light may be gained thereby, to the Illustration of that necessary, yet too little Studied Point, the *Practicall use of that precious, engaging Ordinance.* I pray you therefore, let me know, in what Particulars you desire to be better informed, concerning the Subject in hand, and I shall be contented to be led by you in the matter, and Method of our ensuing discourse.

After.

First, then, Sir, Although you led me into the understanding of many pretious truths, concerning the way of improving Infant-Baptisme practically, yet I remember you omitted one (and that a Principall) use of Baptism, wherein *Administration at the yeares of Discretion*, seemes to have the advantage of *Infant-Baptisme*, viz. [in the Assurance of Remission of sins:]

pag. 5.

And Secondly, you Suggest another, which to some, (and those, sober men) seems dubious; viz. [the probability of conveighing actual Justification, and Regeneration unto some Infants in the very Administration.] In both which particulars, I desire to be farther instructed by you, at our entrance. Some other things I shall suggest

gest to you, when these are dispatched.

*Pædo.*

It is true, as to the *former* of these particulars, our former discourse was deficient, and the *later* was not so fully delivered, as to remove all scruples; And therefore I thank you, that you put me in mind of them, and (upon the account of that courtesie) I shall endeavour to give you as ample satisfaction in them as I may.

*First*, therefore, I acknowledg *Remission of sins*, a special part of the Spiritual grace sealed in Baptism. And I *withall* suppose, that I can prove, (contrary to what you say) *That in the sealing of this mercy, Infant-Baptism, hath the advantage of Baptism at riper years*, as well as in the other particulars, insisted upon in our former discourse. But, suppose I could not; it is enough (notwithstanding) to your satisfaction, if I prove it *no lesse useful*. For supposing the balance weigh but even in this particular, yet it will follow, *that no man need remove his Baptism at years of discretion, for a benefit which Infant-Baptism as fully exhibited, as Baptism at those years can do*. Now this *later* I will undertake in the *first* place; and afterwards descend to offer you a consideration or two, to clear the probability (at least) of my *first* proposition. Onely, (for orders sake) I must intreate you to acquaint me wherein you conceive the advantage to lie on your side in this particular, and I doubt not to shew you your mistake therein.

In this, Sir, that the *present* application of the Sacramental Element, to an understanding person, is a *present actual assurance* of the Grace sealed;

*After.*



led which to an Infant incapable of understanding cannot be so : and the looking back to the baptisme received in Infancy, at yeares of discretion, receives much disadvantage in point of the livenessse of application, by the distance of time betweene the Ordinance, and the use thus made of it.

*Pado.*

If the advantage lie on the Anabaptists side in this particular, that advantage must be bottomed on this ground, [*that the sealing efficacy of a sacrament is tied to the time of administration :*] or at least, [*that that which followes the time of administration, is lesse prevalent to assure the benefits sealed, then that which accompanies it.*] Neither of which, will easily be granted by me, or (I suppose) by any intelligent person, that studies the nature of sacraments, and the experience of Christians in them.

As to the *first* of those grounds, I am assured, that Sacraments were never intended by God to exert their vertue onely in, or during the Administration. For then, it would follow that the Baptisme once received, at whatever age, is no farther to be improved by the party receiving it ; and so, either Baptism must be altogether a barren Sacrament all our lives, but only during the little time of its administration : or else, to *renew the benefit* thereof, we must often *renew the administration* it selfe. And in the *other* Sacrament, I doubt not, but your owne experience, and the experience of many other Christians, must testifie, that, to their *once* sensible receiving benefit by it during the time of administration, they have found the advantage of it afterward.

*ten times.* And moreover such a principle as this, where it is (I know not from what ground) taken up by tender-hearted, and scrupulous Communicants, hath been found, by my small experience in the affaires of troubled Consciences, a very great snare whiles they have come to the ordinance with such expectations of present sensible benefit, and being defeated therein, gone away with great consternation of spirit, concluding themselves unworthy receivers; and drawing all the sad consequences of unworthy receiving upon themselves, to discourage themselves from approaching againe

By consequence therefore, Baptisme administered at Infant-age, may at after-yeares, yield its vertue and efficacy as well, (possibly as early to *one* then baptized, as baptism at yeares of discretion, to *another* to whom then it is administered: seeing God is not bound to make the Ordinance efficacious at the precise time of administration, either to the one, or to the other.

But, however, to *some* adult persons. you will grant, the *present operation* of the sacrament *with the administration.* If it then be but *possible* to the adult, and *impossible* to Infants (as indeed it is) to feele the *present efficacy* of the ordinance; I conceive herein is a sufficient disadvantage to Infant-Baptisme.

I shall not dispute the possibility on either hand; but, granting what you say therein, I shall onely enquire of you, *whence the sacrament of Baptisme is rendred thus affectual,* as to give a present actuall assurance of Remission of sins to any person? Is it *barely* from the *pirit of*  
God

*After.*

*Pado.*



God cooperating with it? Or, is it from the *understanding application* of the things signified in, and with the signe, also?

*After.  
Pædo.*

Surely, from *both* together.

Then surely, Infant-Baptisme, acted over again upon *another* in my presence, may doe no lesse in this kind, then if it were then, and there administred to *me* in mine owne person. For surely, the morall application of the signes may bee actually, and as effectually made by an understanding Christian, putting himselfe in the place of another to whom it is applied, as if hee were the very subject of that application. Tis but the annexing of this short meditation, to what is then said and done.

——— *Mutato nomine de me,*

*This was once done to me, which is now acted on the person of that Infant; God speakes that to me now in his person, what hee spake to me then in mine owne.*

And as for the *concurrence of the Spirit*, I suppose you allow him to be a free agent, that like *the wind, blowes when, and where he listeth*, and therefore, by the after-meditation of Baptisme received in Infancy, upon such an occasion, it is as possible, I may receive this Assurance by his concurrence, as if I my selfe were then, and there the subject of the Administration.

*After.*

But however, *Sir*, the *second* ground before mentioned may turne the scales on the Anabaptists side in this particular. For surely, though it should be true, that the sealing vertue of Infant-Baptisme may be received, as truly many yeares after, as that of Baptisme at yeares, in the

the moment of administration: yet, that sealing efficacy is more strong and powerfull, under a present application, then afterwards.

I told you also before, that this *second ground* would admit of as much dispute. as the former. For if the assurance be given, by the same spirit, at the one or other season, it is stronger or weaker according to the greater or lesser measure of cooperating influence from that spirit. But it may be you will abstract the consideration of the *supernaturall Agent*, in this case, and looke onely, to the effect, as it depends upon an applicatory use of the administration it selfe.

You rightly ghesse, *Sir*, and I cannot in that particular, so soone let goe my hold of this Argument, when I consider, that in the administration of the other Sacrament, we choose rather to receive the Elements with their particular application in the Sacramentall words, *ourselves*, then to stand and looke on whiles they are administred to *others*; and I conceive upon the *same* ground: because therein wee apprehend a more direct, immediate, and particular obigation of the benefits sealed, and so suppose it to be more morally operative of the assurance therein exhibited. Now in this case, there seemes to be *par ratio*, a like reason in both Sacraments.

Suppose it, yet it will only hold the same, when the persons are alike considered, in both Sacraments, which I conceive, is not done, as you lay the case. The person, I suppose, making his advantage of Baptisme administred to another,

*Pædo.*

*After.*

*Pædo.*



ther, is one, who hath received it himselfe also. The person you suppose, making advantage of the Lords Supper administred to another, is a bare Spectator, not having communicated therein himselfe also : and so the case is not the same, as to the *persons*, though, as to the *Sacraments* it may be. Lay the case then, thus. A man that hath, it may be, received the Sacramentall Elements of the Lords Supper, himselfe, is withall present at the administration of it to others. And I would faine know, whether he may not draw as effectuall an assurance from it as so administred, putting himselfe by applicatory meditation, in the case of every other particular receiver, as he did or might, when he himselfe was the particular subject of the administration ? For my part, I judge he may. Otherwise, when any particuler persons have received the Elements themselves, I know not why they should think themselves obliged (as to their owne benefit) to continue their presence at the administration thereof to others : but (as beggars at a dole) when they are served, depart, not minding at all what others receive.

But, suppose your case were right laid, yet I am not of the mind, but that the consideration of the very circumstance of *Infant administration* in the case of Baptisme, is of speciall efficacy to promote Assurance of my particular remission, when by occasion of the same administration upon others, I am led to an application of what was done to *my selfe* ; nor lesse then actuall Baptisme would be, if I were the present subject of that administration, at yeares of capacity. For

me

mee thinkes, I could thus, upon such an occasion, plead it out with God, and in pleading, worke it upon my selfe. Lord, I am in this administration minded of an Act of Oblivion long since sealed to me when I was in the same capacity with yonder Infant. I have often pleaded it, (thou knowest) at thy Throne of grace; and beene as often tempted to doubt whether my plea were admitted or no. Sometimes, the greatnesse of my sinnes, sometimes the weakenesse of my faith, the defects of my repentance, the faintnesse and flatnesse of my prayers, and (in all of these and many particulars more) the unworthynesse of my person, have discouraged me. But Lord, am I now more unworthy to receive the mercies themselves, then I was at that time to receive the seale of them? Surely thou didst then seale free pardon to me, when I could not in the largest charity, be supposed to have any thing of personall worth, to plead for it. I desire now no other pardon then what thou sealedst then. What I was necessarily voyd of then, I now strip my selfe of voluntarily. And shall I be lesse favourably entertained by thee, because I now see, confesse, bewaile mine owne unworthynesse, which was indeed the same then, but unseene, unconfessed, and unbewailed? Surely thou that blottest out transgressions for thine owne names sake, canst not lesse glorifie thy Name, by pardoning a penitent, confessing sinner, when out of his owne mouth thou might'st condemne him, then by extending the same pardon, to a sinner, that wanted an heart to repent, and a mouth to confesse.

Thus you see how I could improve the Infant-admini-



administration of Baptisme, to strengthen Assurance of remission of sins, many years after.

After.

Yea but *Sir*, Infant Baptisme at most can onely give the Assurance of the remission of *Originall sin*, seeing the party to whom it was then sealed, could be capable of no other; so that either Baptisme here by, must be confined to that *only*, in its sealing act; or else, if it be also a seale of the remission of *actuell sins*, it will need a second administration applicable to persons, when they have superadded the guilt of them also.

Pædo.

Neither your *dilemma*, nor the *ground* of it, *neighbour*, offers any violence to the doctrine before delivered; For (as to the *ground*) it will not follow from the incapacity of *actuell* guilt in the subject of Infant-Baptisme, that God seals only to such a subject the pardon of *originall* sin. Indeed, [*as Infant-Baptism*] it most primarily and properly respects *originall* sin, the sin of the party to whom it is then administered. But [*as Baptism*] I know not what hinders, but that God may also beforehand extend that seale to the pardon of *actuell* sin, to them who afterwards should commit it. I am assured *circumcision* was not only the seale of remission of sins to those who needed it only for the pardon of *originall* guilt, but also to those who afterwards contracted the guilt of *actuell* sins. For the Apostle tells us it was *a seale of the righteousness of faith*; and so sealed righteousness to those who were capable of applying it by faith (who were *actuell* sinners) as well as to those whose age rendered them incapable of *actuell* believing.

Rom. 4. 11.

And

And indeed to set forth the rich grace of God in pardoning, and the compleate efficacy of Christs satisfaction, in procuring the pardon of sin, it was very much conducive to Gods glory in both; to seale pardon of *actuell* sin before commission of it, though not to apply it *actually*, before commission and repentance. For so, in sealing to man in his Infant Age, the pardon of those sins which afterwards he should commit, God doth in effect tell him, (and that roundly and fully) that the Originall spring of pardoning and reconciling grace, is in himselfe, who *found* *a ransom* before we sought it, that he is the first in that work, seeing he prevents the very commission of, and much more, the repentance for our sins, by bringing us under a gracious sealed Covenant of pardon, before capacity of actuell guilt. Nor doth he herein, lesse clearly and fully speake out the compleatnesse of the efficacy of Christs blood sealed in Baptisme, by letting us know, that our God before hand accepted that-atonement for us, which in time he applies to us; and the favour of Christ propitiatory sacrifice, hath ascended into his nostrils, and hath virtually attoned him to us, before the blood of the Covenant runs forth upon us in the Order of gospel-application, to our actuell reconciliation.

Job 33. 24

And hereby you may see also *one* horn of your *dilemma* sawed off, seeing I do not confine the efficacy of Baptisme, though administred in Infancy, to *Originall sin* onely.

And as for the *other*; it being cleared in the former discourse, that a seale of forgiveness,

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even of actuall sin, may (without absurdity) be said to be administred before it can be actually applied by the receiver ; there will no necessity appear of administring it a second time, at years of capacity for actuall application: because the vertue of that which was before received, extends it selfe through the whole course of a mans life afterwards, and is as often applicable, as he commits, and repents of actuall sin. And if it were but so, yet there is another Sacrament, often to be received, which would abundantly supply the defect of this, seeing it seales the same grace, *remission of sins* in the blood of Christ.

*After.*

Sir, I must confesse my selfe much obliged to you for your copious enlargement upon this head, wherein I suppose it convenient both for your selfe, and me, to pauze a while. *For your selfe*, because I doubt, you may be tired, by following me in my weake and prolix reasoning: and *for me*, because I have nothing of moment to reply at present that may deserve your farther stay thereon. Especially, when I consider, that you and I may, by Gods providence, meete again, and so I shall have other opportunities of receiving farther satisfaction from you hereafter, if upon farther thoughts, I shall see need to require it: wherefore, I shall presume, (if you please) to demand those considerations in the next place from you, which you promised, to conclude it probable at least, *that* (in this point of promoting the *Assurance of remission of sins*) *Infant Baptisme*, hath the advantage of *Baptisme administred at riper years*.

*Pædo.*

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ment, and I know no reason you have to account it any presumption in you, to sue a confessed debt. In a few words therefore, I shall endeavour satisfaction both to it, and you.

*First* therefore, to me it seems probable (at least) that to the assurance of pardon on Gods part, (for Sacraments assure no otherwise, then by signifying and ratifying the grace of God in the pardon of sins, they do not assure, or seale, any qualifications for pardon) those evidences that lead most to the consideration of grace as most *free*, are most effectually. Now that Infant-Baptisme doth so, rather then Baptisme at yeares of discretion, I have already shewn in part, and shall more fully cleare anon.

*Secondly*, It seemes to me no lesse probable, that that evidence of pardoning grace which most abstracts from the consideration, of any *difference betwene sinnes*, from any imaginable aggravations, is likely to be most effectually assuring. Now the evidence drawne from the sealing of remission in Baptisme administred in Infancy, is upon a peculiar account, such. A pardon sealed, before a capacity of *actuell sin*, which (in the aggravating circumstances thereof) puts the only difference between sinner and sinner; gives equall hopes, and encouragements to all sinners, and so is alike applicable to every ones conscience, to whome it is so sealed, being laid hold on by faith. Now although the same grace, and that in the same latitude, bee sealed in Baptisme at age, yet that latitude is not alike visibly held forth in the Administration of the Seale at that age. So that however the like



grounds of Assurance bee derivable from the Covenant, at any-Age, yet in the *sealing of that Covenant* at Infant-Age, the advantage apparently lyes, as to that helpe, which the seale (as distinct from the Covenant) doth afford toward it. Possibly, this may bee plainer to you if exemplified in the person of a Christian, gathering Assurance thus. *Soule, why art thou thus cast downe, and why art thou disquieted within me? Is it the guilt of sin that distempers thee, and disturbs thy peace? and what greater Assurance canst thou have, of the pardon of sin, then Gods gracious promise, and the ratification of it by his seale in the sacrament of Baptism? Is not that water, by signification, the blood of Christ, through which we have redemption in the remission of sins? And is not the application of it to thee, by Christs Minister in his name (as all acts of Embassadors are which they performe by deputation from their Prince,) as valid to loose thee from thy guilt, as if hee in his owne person had beene the administrator? Hath hee promised in vaine, that whatsoever his Ministers loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven, Mat 18. 18 and engaged his presence in vaine to his Gospell administrations to the worlds end? Mat. 28. 20. If Christ then have opened thee a fountaine for sin, and for uncleannesse, as he hath, doe not thou shut it against thy selfe by an unbelieving exclusion of thy selfe from it. Is it the greatnesse of thy guilt that discourageth thee? Take then into thy serious consideration, the season of this gracious Act on Christs part. Thou hadst not indeed at that time contracted the guilt of any actual*

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sins, much lesse dipped them in graine, by multitudes of aggravations as since thou hast. But he that then said to thee [sonne, or daughter, I seale to thee the forgivenesse of thy sins] excepted not any out of this number; (that had beene to have disparaged his owne precious blood, whose greatest honour it is to be able to wash out the deepest stains of guilt) yea, in sealing the pardon before the capacity of commission, he sealed the pardon of all that thou wer'st capable to commit, upon the same termes on thy part, upon which he sealed the pardon of any. viz. future faith and repentance. Improve therefore Gods baptismall Covenant with thee in Infancy, to the utmost latitude, and possibly thou maist draw Assurance from the breasts of it, even against the greatest guilt.

And thus much shall suffice me to offer for the asserting the probability of greater evidence (at least in some respects) to the Assurance of pardon, by and from Infant-baptisme, then from the same administration at riper yeares: whereof you may judge as you please, upon your owne private thoughts. It is enough to me (however) to have proved (as I suppose) evidently, that Infant-Baptisme in this use, is not behind Baptisme at riper years; and in many others, before it. Have you any farther imployment for me, concerning this subject?

Yes, Sir, for whereas (as I before told you) you assert p. 5. of your former booke, a probability of Gods bestowing grace upon *some* Childre in the instant of baptisme, viz. upon elect Children, dying in Infancy, and that, not only justifying, but sanctifying: and p. 23. you doe,



relation to sanctification, allow Sacraments a *physicall influence* towards the conveyance thereof unto the soule : (and so Baptisme physically to sanctifie some infants,) as well as a *morall influence* towards the working of holinesse by the use of reason, and faith in persons who at yeares of delcretion come to make use of them. In both of these particulars I find some sober and pious men dissatisfied, in the *former* with the *doctrine* ; in the *later* with the *expression*. And therefore I must intreate your grounds for the *former*, and your *sense* of the *later*.

*Pædo.*

I shall very willingly endeavour your satisfaction, and in you, theirs. For (although the *former* of those passages be somewhat eccentricall to my maine discourse in that book, and I expresse it only dubiously, as not finding so sure a footing as I could desire in so dark a point ; and the *later* be a phrase that I lay no great weight upon ; so that it doth not much concerne me whether they be owned or disowned ; yet) I shall be so tender of any sober mens satisfaction, that I shall not willingly leave you or them scrupled in any word that drops from my tongue or pen, as far as I can prevent it. When therefore I hinted to you the *probablenesse of a possibility* (for that is the highest pin that I dared reach to in this point) *that justifying and sanctifying grace, may be bestowed upon some Infants in Baptisme* : I did it upon these grounds, and considerations.

1. That *justification* and *sanctification* are the principall graces that baptisme scales on Gods part ; all other mercyes and favours depending upon them, which, in the former branch, viz.

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*Justifying grace*, I suppose none ever called in Question: and as to the later, *sanctifying grace*, I shall endeavour to cleare anon, in case any should doubt of it.

2. That it is generally agreed by our Divines that the Sacraments are not *nuda signa*, bare *signes* of the grace they signify. The generall signification of the word *seale*, applied by the Apostle, Rom. 4. 11. to circumcision, futing unto every Ordinance of the same generall nature with it; we have learned to call all Sacraments (being such in that generall) *seales of the Covenant of grace*. Now a *seale*, doth not only *ratify* a deed, but also *legally conveigh*, by that ratification, a present *right* from party to party. In the case in question, the deed or writing is the *Covenant of grace*, the *seale* is *baptisme*. This *seale* therefore according to the nature of a *seale*, doth both *ratify* Gods Covenant, and *conveigh* a right to the benefits of that Covenant, to the persons to whom it is administred.

3. (Because in this Covenant the persons interessed are of severall capacities,) for in adult or growne persons justification coms to be bestowed upon believing; and sanctification, in the attendance upon the outward and ordinary meanes of working it, but infants can neither believe nor use the meanes in which faith is wrought (therefore) I suppose I had cause to conclude, that God justifies them upon *another account*, and sanctifies them in *another way*, then those that are of age. And (by consequence) that baptism now (as circumcision of old) *seales* and *conveighs* to them, these graces, according to



the same difference. And in this particular, I shall tell you by the way, what a godly and learned minister writes to me. *As in the bodily life (saith he) one organ is the instrument of nourishment to the Child in the Womb, another when borne: so in the conuighance of spirituall life, 'tis one way to a Child, another to one of yeares. For this is not the most universal proposition of the Gospel, [He that beleeueth shall be saved:] but this, He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.] Now God gives his Son by the Spirit, and we receive him by faith: but God can supply the want of that hand in a Child, by drepping into his mouth what he cannot receive with his hand, as I may so say.*

4. (Because we have no clear light to determine the exact season of Gods bestowing these graces on Infants; and they are alike capable of them at all times after the Covenant takes hold of them) I propounded it as not impossible nor improbable, that in that Ordinance which conueighs a *legall right to them*, God may put them in *possession of them*. I doe not say, that he cannot or doth not bestow them on those that dye unbaptized; nor that God hath appointed that Ordinance for that purpose (at least, so as we may lay any stresse of faith upon it, certainly to expect it therein:) but only that there seemes to be a probability, that God (who useth to convey grace by Ordinances, where he affords opportunity and capacity to enjoy them) may in Baptism (the only Ordinance that Infants come under) bestow on them the pardon of sin, and sanctification of nature.

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5. (Because we have no ground to extend this Charity to *all Infants*; no nor to *all Infants of believing parents*, divers of whom, it appears, may live, and dye unjustified and unsanctified; therefore) I farther advanced, to limit my Charity in this particular. And to this purpose, considering that Election is, confessedly, the immutable rule according to which God justifies, and sanctifies, I was cautious of extending (with Dr. *Ward*, and others) the *skirt* of justifying, and the *seed* of sanctifying grace to any non-elected. For I was not, nor am I satisfied, that the Justification, or sanctification of Infants, is of *another nature*, then the justification, and sanctification of grown persons, though bestowed in *another way*. I know no *justification*, but that which consists in the *remission of sins*, and *acceptation of our persons*, through the *imputation of Christs righteousness*; nor *sanctification*, but that *participation of the devine nature*, that *seed of God*, of which Peter and John speake; and therefore I cannot extend justification and sanctification to all infants visibly under the Covenant, or upon that account baptized, because I am perswaded it cannot be done, without supposition of *falling away* from saving grace; seeing many such fall away, and perish everlastingly. And here also I shall once more quote the words of the same *reverend man* in the same Letter. I *conceive* (saith he, being by me asked his judgment in this point) *Change of Covenant, and change of Image are inseparable. And that Baptisme scales that Interest which men have before they are baptized, nay before they are borne*; Look how they are written

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in the records of eternity, (*Elect*, or non-*Elect*) so it seales, as also doth the other Sacrament; a visible right by vertue of their visible Interest, an invisible right, by vertue of their invisible interest, if any such they have at all, which God only knoweth, & de secretis non judicat Ecclesia, secret things belong to God, but things revealed to us and our Children.

6. (Because, of *Elect* Infants, some die in infancy, and others live to yeares of discretion) I knew no reason to conclude, that God would break his owne Ordinary roade of bestowing these graces in Infant Age, upon those that live to the use of means appointed to that end. And I suppose (excepting the case of *John the Baptist*, who yet may be looked on, as so privileged upon an extraordinary account, to wit, that by a miraculous instinct, he might beare witness to Christ, as his forerunner in the wombe, as well as in the wilderness) it can hardly be asserted *de facto*, concerning any one that ever lived to a perfect use of reason, that he was justified and sanctified from the wombe, or any period of Infancy whatsoever; Nor have we any Scripture warrant to expect it. Nay, it were against the very end for which God appoints the use of means: seeing by bestowing saving grace out of them to those who live to enjoy them; God would in a sort make voyd his owne Institutions. For what need of them when the ends of them may be otherwise attained? I confesse, grace is wrought in some very early, possibly in Childhood, but ordinarily, 'tis after they come under catechizing.

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Upon these considerations therefore, I made bold to adde another limit to my probable assertion; to wit, their *not surviving an Infant-age*: or (as I there expresse my selfe) *that such as (being Elected) dye in Infancy*, are onely the subjects of this my Charity.

And herein I having asked the advice of another godly and reverend minister, as most in this nation, he returnes me this Answer, *As to that particular concerning Elect Infants that dye before actuall faith, I doe altogether concur with you, and I have the consent of two able Divines whom I consulted of late, the rather, that you might be the better perswaded and encouraged to adhere to that opinion.*

Now I know no reason why any one should be offended at me for a proposition so warily laid downe, and that under the favour of so many received Orthodox principles.

But Sir, I have heard it objected against this doctrine, that hereby you give no more ground of hope to parents, of their Childrens salvation, then the *Anabaptists* give, or then we may have of Heathens Children; seeing the *Anabaptist* supposeth Infants may be justified, and sanctified according to the *Election*, as well as you. And the Children of Heathens may (for any thing we know) be *elected*, as well as ours.

Both these objections, (I conceive) doe not prejudice my opinion at all. For first, the *Anabaptist* ownes *Election*, but doth not owne the *Covenant*. And so he hath (according to his principles) no speciall ground to derive his hopes of Election with relation to Children, downe

After.

Pædo.



d owne to the case of this or that particular. But we that owne the Covenant of God to us, and all our seed, can say upon good grounds, we are perswaded of the Election, and salvation of such and such a Child dying in Infancy, because a visible standing under the Covenant of grace to any particular person, who by any declared forfeiture hath not justly cut himselfe off therefrom, gives sufficient grounds of Charity to judge that such an one is Elected, and shall be saved; Though some of them may be neither. For it followes not, that because we assert a Charity grounded on a probability of Election, and salvation, to our Infants as our Infants. from their Interest in the Covenant; that therefore we must inferre a necessity of an actuall donation of all the blessings held forth in the Covenant, to all of them. Because a visible standing in the Covenant binds me to extend the same Charity to hypocrites, and yet God doth not take himselfe bound by that Covenant to give them grace and salvation, to whom we may and must hope, he hath given them.

And, (as for the *Children of Heathens*) I know they may (for ought we know) be under Gods Election; but whiles they are Infants, and so shew not any signe of actuall vocation (as indeed they cannot) and their parents are apparer t'y without the Church; I have no ground to conclude any of them Elected; because I find the whole body of Heathens (as such) excluded the Covenant, which is the only warrantable ground of my Charity. Eph. 2. 12.

In a word, I desire no man to subscribe to my

*opinion*

opinion herein, except my grounds satisfie him. And though no man should be satisfied either in my opinion, or the grounds of it, I shall not be offended at him. For if I be out of the way herein, I suppose it doth not a jot prejudice my maine undertaking, seeing there are abundance more *pricious uses of Infant-Baptisme*, that stand upon surer grounds, though it should be granted, [that it conveighs pardon of sins or sanctifying grace actually to none.] And yet I thinke I was not to blame, that having some apprehensions of a probability it might be so (which yet are very strong upon me) I suggested it to you as a consideration not to be slighted, to induce you to present your Children to Baptism.

For my part, *Sir*, I have no quarrell at you upon that account, Especially seeing I perceive you lay no more stresse upon it, nor obligation upon me to receive it: I shall therefore cease your farther trouble in this particular: and only desire your explication of the other expression wherein you call Sacraments *Physicall helps* to convey these graces. What mean you thereby?

I meane no other, then that they are (as God pleaseth to fill them) *conduits of the grace of the Covenant*, as I expresse my selfe p. 5 of my former booke. For the whole of my judgment herein is, that, [as Sacraments (as divine *seals*) conveigh a right to the grace signified; so God in the same Ordinances duely applied, may take the occasion of deriving to the soule, in or by them, the said grace, (though possibly without any morall or rationall improvements of them on our part) by the secret operation and influence

*After.*

*Pædo.*



*Illic ( viz. in Baptismo ) nobis ablutionem nostram testabatur Deus, et simul efficit quod figurat.*

*And, Nisi enim conjuncta esset veritas rei aut exhibitio, impropria hæc locutio esset, [ Baptismus est lavacrum animæ. ] Again, Signo Deum tanquam organo usi, non est absurdum. Calv. in Epist. 5. 26.*

*After.*

influence of his owne Spirit; in case, the want of such personall improvement of them be our meere *impotency*, not our *guilt*. ] All that I herein assigne to Sacraments, is to be onely *the way* in which God comes to doe the good held forth in them to the soule: whether it be applying pardon, or conferring holynesse, strength, comfort, as a returne of our obedient owning of him in his owne Institutions. And I knew not how to expresse *this way* that brings God home to me or another, herein, better then by calling a Sacrament a *Physicall* help: as opposed to such an one as is meere *morall*, which contributes to the elect, only by the intervening of a mans owne faculties in a rationall way. And sure I am, *Calvin* saith altogether as much as I. See the margin. But I say herein, as (formerly) in the other Answer, I am not fond of this *distinction* more then of that *opinion*; if any one can expresse the same Notion better, I shall be glad to learne of him. For I am perswaded of the thing, (and I think the experience of many growne Christians will witnesse it in the other Sacrament) but not so indulgent to my owne faculty of expressing my selfe, but that I conceive I may very well undergoe the *ferule* of many of my reverend brethren; and where I see they *correct me in measure*, shall doe so.

I suppose it is but reasonable that you be allowed the liberty of cloathing your own notions in your own expressions. I have only one thing more upon this head to exercise you withall, and that is, how you difference this doctrine of yours from the *Papists*, that hold, the Sacraments to be effectually

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actuall *ex opere operato*, as they call it, affirming the bare receiving of them, to derive the benefits signified, and held forth in them?

My opinion herein stands at a great distance from theirs. For by their doctrine they make no difference, between good and bad, Elect or non-Elect, in the participation of those benefits. They hold, that in Baptism, all Infants that receive it, are actually regenerate; whereas I restraine the efficacy of that Ordinance only to the Elect, and admit not all of them neither: for I exclude those of the elect, that afterwards live, to live under meanes of regeneration, therefrom. And in the other Sacrament, they hold, that the wicked, and reprobates, eat *panem Dominum*, the body of the Lord, as well as *panem Domini*, the bread of the Lord; I restraine that benefit only to the Elect, and those, truly regenerate, and actually prepared for the beleieving reception of it. He that will see the exact sense of the Papists in their doctrine of the *opus operatum*, may read Chemnitius in his *Examen concilii Trid. sess. 7. Can. 8.* where from their owne Schoolmen, he shewes that they directly oppose, the opinion of the *opus operatum*, (in this case) to faith in the receivers; and make this the difference between the Sacrament of the old and new Testament, that in those there was required faith, to the derivation of benefit from them; but in these, the *opus operatum*, the work done, is sufficient without faith; which (where there is a capacity of actuall faith in the receivers, as in all of age baptized, and all receivers of the Lords supper) we absolutely require.

*Pædo.*



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quire. Besides in the case of *baptism*, the Papists hold, that *Baptisme* in its receivers, works such a renovation, as that there remaines no originall sin, at least, under the proper notion of sin, so as to render them obnoxious to the wrath of God, and the damnation of hell. And this is the effect of their *opus operatum*, in Baptisme. On the contrary, I owne the inherence of *Originall sin* in Infants after Baptisme, which abundantly appears in the fruits it afterward brings forth, when they come to a capacity of acting electively: and that their Baptisme doth no way take from *Originall concupiscence* the true and genuine nature of sin.

Onely, I suppose, a possibility, and prebability, that in some elect infants, viz. those of them that dye in Infancy, the season of Gods doing that which all Christians acknowledge is done at one time or other, before the separation of soule and body, (viz. their justification, and renovation) is rather the time of baptism then any other time. And I must tell you, did the Popist Doctrine of the *opus operatum*, extend no farther, then *Infant Baptisme*; and hold forth no more, then that God doth at the time of Baptisme, and in, and with the administration, justifie and sanctifie some Infants, I know no popery in it. For I find many Antipapists write larger then this comes to. As, for justification, some say, that all the Infants of believing parents being sincerely presented to God in Baptisme, are freed from the guilt of original sin: but for a small Change, they utterly deny it, (though I suppose it will be hard to prove from the

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the Scripture, that God ever wrought or promised to worke, a *relative* Change, without a *re-all*. I am sure, the Apostle Paul in that golden Chaine, joynes them, the linke of justification, is annexed to that of *vocation* on one hand, and *glorification* on the other. And although there be some difference to which of these two, (*vocation* or *glorification*) *sanctification* belongs; yet, I doe not find, but that all Orthodox divines, judge it included in one, or both.)

Others, grant both justification and sanctification in Baptisme, but affirme the extent of them in too great a latitude; to wit to all infants duely baptized, and not laying any impediment, of themselves, to hinder the taking place of that grace, (which indeed no Infants can doe, when infants; and afterwards, it implyes a contradiction to suppose an impediment may be layd to hinder that grace that is received before in Infancy.)

One reverend man had a peculiar fancy, he supposed all elect Infants, to have pardon and the seed of grace in baptisme, and this seed not extinct, though many yeares continuing in divers of them, till conversion. And yet all these farre from Popery even in this point, both in their owne judgments, and esteemed so in the Charity of others. I neede not name parties, nor am I willing to doe it; partly, because I am loth to seeme ambitious of being knowne to dissent from men of great names; and partly, to avoyd occasion of commencing suites against me, upon a businesse wherein I am extremely unwilling to contend.



To shut up this whole businesse; *neighbour*, if *all* these Orthodox Divines be not out, there is such a thing possible, and probable, as justification of Infants *in articulo Baptismi*, in the very instant of baptisme: and if *many* of them be not out, *sanctification* too. All the dispute is concerning the extent of the grace so conferred.

They that extend it farthest, enlarge the comfort of that Doctrine to all believing parents concerning all their issue; they that contract it most, (among whom, (and possibly beyond most of whom) I reckon my selfe to be) doe not so straiten it, but that they render every particular believing parent no lesse capable of improveing it to his comfort; seeing whatever is Gods purpose concerning this or that particular Child according to the decree of Election, they allow him an equall ground from the Covenant, and the seale thereof, to conclude *every* such Child of his, during infancy, under the same grace, which is extended to *any*. So that, which judgment soever you most incline to, you will see cause for the encouragement I gave you to present your Children to Baptisme, from the possible, yea probable present advantage accrewing thereby, in their actuall *justification*, and *sanctification*.

*After.*

*Sir*, your candour, and openness in this particular much Obligeth me, and I assure you whatever satisfaction I find in my selfe as to your opinion, when I farther consider it, I am much satisfied in your way of delivering it; and therefore shal urge you no farther herein: but remembring that you gave also an hint in your former dis-

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course of the *furtherance of conversion* by the principles and practise of Infant-Baptisme. I shall desire to heare that particular enlarged also, if it may stand with your conveniency, in the next place.

You cannot put me upon a welcomer taske. For I verily perswade my selfe, since the *neglect* of Infant-Baptisme, and (which is worse) the *contempt* sinfully cast upon it, in divers places of the Land, this worke is lesse successfully carried on by Gods painful Ministers; and they have too much cause to complaine, of a strange barrenesse in the wombe of the Gospell, in comparison with former times, which I impute to these Reasons.

1. To the just judgment of God upon a Nation, that after so gracious a continuance of the Gospell, and its *holy mercies* among them for so many yeares, unthankfully began to grow willing to let the *Lease* of such a precious priviledg run out without taking any care to *renew* it to their posterity after them: a sin, which you may remember, I have deeply and justly Charged upon the principles of Anabaptisme in our former discourse.

Sometimes, (me-thinkes) when I seriously consider the reason of the slow progresse of this worke of conversion, I seeme to hear God saying concerning England, *Ab, ungratefull Nation! Have I this requitall from you, for the derivation of Church-mercies, and Covenant-mercies to you, through the meanes of Infant-Baptisme, that you begin to dispute away the Title that I have to your posterity, and (like profane Esau)*

*Pædo.*

P. 61, 62.  
79, 80



*Esaus*) contemne your best birthright, the Covenant, and sollemn seale thereof? Have you a mind to dissolve the bond betwene me, and your posterity? Had you rather have them visible members of the Pagan world, then weare the badge of Christians? Is my family growne so contemptible a thing in your eyes, that you care not to have your Children beare so much as a visible relation to it, or be seene in my livery? Well, then, take your option, you shall not need take much paines to disoblige them from me, and me from them. I will save you the labour of disputing downe that contemned relation to me: whiles you dispute I will dis-Spirit mine owne ordinances, and so they shall grow heathens under them, whom you would faine make heathens without them.

2. To the grievous prejudice, against those Ministers, Societies, and Ordinances, in which God hath beene wont to scatter saving grace in this Nation; which are, if not raysed, yet daily fomented by *Anabaptisme*. I confesse, I have sometimes wondred, (supposing our Ministers to be in an errour in the misapplication of an Ordinance) how any man pretending to reason or conscience, can justify a separation from it barely upon that account; especially in another Ordinance different from that upon which the misapplication is Charged. But upon serious consideration of the matter, I can scarce see, but the principles of that profession of *Anabaptisme*, necessarily involve it. For supposing Infant-Baptisme null, as they doe, they cannot looke upon either Ministers or people in our Congregations,

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Congregations, as other then non-members of the visible Church, and so looke upon all the Ordinances administred in those congregations by those ministers, as no Church-Ordinances, and (by just consequence) administred without a *call*, and not to be attended on with expectation of a  *blessing*. Now experience shewes, that nothing more hinders the operation of the *word*, then a prejudicate opinion of the *preacher*, and among all prejudices against the preacher, there are none more operative this way, then those that call the Authority of his *place*, and *calling* into Question. So that, seeing Anabaptism raiseth, and nourseth, and propagateth these prejudices, against that Ministry, wherein conversion in former dayes hath beene dispensed, it is no wonder if it be unhappily accessory to the hinderance of its progresse, more then hath beene observed heretofore, under the like means.

3. To the Actuall disengagement of many young people, (among whom usually the streame of converting grace most runs) from all relation, to God, Church, and Ordinances, till of their owne Choyce they take up Baptisme at yeares of discretion. Now whiles persons live loose from such engagements, as in their proper nature and tendency further conversion, no wonder if the worke go slowly on among them. As on the other side, I shall shew you by and by, how many speciall advantages a Child of a believing parent, dedicated to God in Infancy, by Baptisme, hath over another, suffered to graze in the wild common of the world, without Gods sheep-marke upon him, towards



this necessary worke.

*After.*

Truely, *Sir*, the small experience that I have gotten in my observation of the present state of this Church and Nation, enables me to second what you say, in these particulars, with mine owne *probatum est*. And I feare. succeeding generations will be too fertile in the same observations. But, I beseech you *Sir*, proceed to shew me the grounds of the hopefullnesse of conversion, upon the principles and practise of *Infant-Baptisme*.

*Pædo.*

You are therefore to understand that a thing may be said to *promote conversion* two wayes :

1. Either by way of *externall meanes*.

2. Or by way of *internall motive*.

I. *First*, then, By way of *externall meanes*. The principles, and practise of *Infant-Baptisme* afford more advantages of *externall meanes* towards conversion, then the contrary principles and practise doe.

For, *First*, *Converting Ordinances* and the *promises of profit* by them, are the peculiar portion of our Infants, thus in Covenant with God, as soone as they are in a capacity of using them. God bestowes the word upon the Church, and its members, upon another account, then upon other people. Persons unrelated to God, enjoy the word only *providentially*, when the sound of it reacheth them. But the word in the Church, is a *Covenant-mercy*. God is engaged to teach them his Lawes, and his Ordinances, he is under no such obligation to others. Every Scholar under a Schoolmasters peculiar charge, may by his relation expect teaching

teaching from him. But other Children, who are not admitted into his Schoole (it is true, he may occasionally as he pleaseth teach them somewhat, but) they are not in a capacity to challenge, and claime it from him. A ministers relation to his flock, binds him to preach the word constantly to them, and every one of his Flock may expect it from him as duely as the Lords day comes, and upon other occasionall seasons, as God shall offer them. But others, though in the next parish, have no such tie upon him; though he may in kindnesse step out now and then, and bestow a sermon, where he sees need.

In like manner, Jesus Christ who is the *great Shepherd of the Sheepe*, is under a peculiar obligation, to feed all those, who are of his flock; and they may claime at his hands their *food in due season*. But what hath he to doe, but by meere courtesie, with those without the fold? As the Apostle *Paul*, saith, in another case, concerning censures, another ordinance for conversion (in its season) *what have I to doe to judge them that are without?* 1 Cor. 5. 12. So may Christ say, (as to point of obligation or Covenant) *what have I to doe, to carry my fodder out of my fold? To teach those that are without?* Now, surely, an Ordinance is there most likely to doe good, where there is a peculiar right thereunto. Me thinkes, the consideration of that place, Rom. 3. 12. Makes very much to the illustration, (if not confirmation) of this point. It seemes the question then was seriously propounded, as the parallel to it, is now captiously. *What advantage then bath the Jew, and*



what profit is there in circumcision ? Hee answers, much every way : Chiefly because to them were committed the Oracles of God. Others, heard of them, and (possibly) might have copies of their Scriptures, (as Ptolomeus Philadelphus set the 72 Interpreters to translate the Old Testament into Greeke, that it might, (being then the learned language) propagate the knowledge of the Jewish Law, through the world.) But yet the Oracles of God were committed to the Jewes, and this upon the account of circumcision. They were a people, that were solemnely, and sacramentally the Lords, and God commits his Oracles to them. Hee permitted them to others providentially : but hee committed them to the Jewes federally, as the Law of the Kingdom he would govern them by. They owed their Bible to circumcision. Gods covenant was in their flesh, and therefore God entrusted them with the Instrument, in which it was drawn up. To bring home this to the present case. It is cleare, that the oracles of God, (that pure Law, which (as David saith) converts the soule) Ps. 19. 7. are the portion of a people in Covenant with God ; Our Infants, therefore, being, according to our principles, in Covenant with God, are intituled to the Bible, and all the contents thereof; and so the precious effects of that word, whereof conversion is one of the principall, may bee comfortably expected to redound to them; & this their Title is pleadable for them, and by them, as soone as they are capable of receiving any benefit therefrom.

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*this word, are (upon the account of Church-membership) theirs, with all their gifts, graces, and labours. Pastours and teachers, are set up in the Church, 1 Cor. 12. 28. and given to them, as a peculiar fruit of Christs ascension, Eph. 4. 12. Paul, & Apollos, and Cephas, are theirs, 1 Cor. 3. 22. Gods husband-men are set over his owne inclosure, his shepherds over his owne flock, and his builders over his owne building. If any persons therefore, bee aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel, no members of the Church, lye common with the rest of the world, shut out of this enclosure, bee not sheep of this fold, no stones in this building; (however God may providentially extend the benefit of his Ministers labours to such persons, yet) they can claime no covenant-right or title to any spirituall advantage from them. The Children therefore of Anabaptists (by their principles) sit under the ministry of the word as meere Heathens, and are onely under a providentiall capacity of receiving benefit from it. But our children even from infancy (by our principles) are entituled by a Covenant-right, to all those precious emoluments which accrew therefrom. Lord Jesus, (may a godly parent of our principles pleade) my child, though but a lamb, yet is of thy fold, beares thy marke, and so hath a right to be fed by the shepherds which thou hast set over thy flock. I have according to my duty, brought him to the ordinance, remember thy Covenant, let the gifts, and labours of thy servants bee profitable to him. Tis the principall part of that Covenant, wherein my childs right lyes; the writing of thy Law in the heart, and thy statutes in the inward parts.*



parts. Jer. 31. 33. *Bee it now to thy servant according to thy Word.*

To this, I may adde, *private meanes of conversion*, to which there are promises made, That *υδεια Κυρις*, the nurture of the Lord, of which the Apostle speakes, *instruction, and correction*, (as ordinances of God) and all the promises made unto them, are not to be extended beyond the Church, as to the benefit to be expected from them. There is no engagement of God to sanctify these meanes, for the working of grace in professed Heathens children (though it could be supposed they might be applyed) till their parents render themselves Covenanters with God, and then those promises take place on their children, and are pleadable for them, as well as others.

Suppose wee *Lois and Eunice*, instructing young *Timothy* in the Scriptures from a sucking child, 2Tim. 3. 15. and mee-thinkes, I see their faith, in the use of that ordinance, encouraging them thus. *Here, Lord, is our Timothy, thy Timothy, (for hee is thine by Covenant, as ours by Nature) wee have in obedience to thy command, endeavoured to season him in the way that hee should goe: Doe thy part, as wee have done ours.*

*After.*

But may not a godly parent of an *Anabaptisticall* judgment, expect a blessing upon his child also in the use of meanes? may hee not obtaine that blessing upon his labours in the education of his child, upon the account of his owne Interest in Christ, whether his child bee in Covenant with him or no, baptized or unbaptized, seeing an Interest in Christ entitles to all promises?

*Pædo.*

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God to his people, is many times, larger then their faith or prayers. So, that God may looke upon those children as in Covenant with him, and deale with them as such, whom their parents deny him a title to. Even when the people of Israel, idolatruously offered their children to *Moloch*, yet God calls them *his children* notwithstanding. They gave them away from him, but God would not part with his title to them so; so though those of the Anabaptisticall way, (some through loose and profane principles, and others through consciencious scruples) deny God the right hee hath to their children, yet God may, and I doubt not, doth, many times, *remember the Covenant* which they sinfully forget, and does them good upon the account thereof, when they never plead it. And as for those few, of those principles, who may challenge the reputation of being truly godly; I dare not but thinke, that they may obtaine grace for their children by prayer, upon other grounds. But, this I constantly affirme, that they cannot plead for it with that strength of Argument, or have so grounded a confidence to prevaile, whiles they deny the Covenant-interest of their children in those Ordinances and promises, which hold it forth, and conveigh it, as others that act faith upon it, may and do, with comfort, and successe.

But, if this be true, *Sir*, I should thinke, that it would appeare, *de facto*, by the multitude of converts, among the children of *Pædo-baptists*, that ordinances and meanes of grace tending thereunto, are peculiarly theirs. But on the contrary, how many of their children, do wee see

Ezek. 16.  
21.

After.



see running the same riot with others? Can it bee supposed, that ordinances should bee so visibly ineffectuall upon such numbers of those, to whom they, and the blessing of them do peculiarly belong?

*Pardo.*

No wonder at all, that it should bee so. The Apostle answers this very objection (in my judgment) in the case of the Jewes, & their Ordinances, *Rom. 3. 3.* when hee had spoken concerning the peculiar right of the Jewes to the *Oracles of God*, v. 2. he foresaw the objection that might thence bee started. *But how when came it to passe, that so many of them were never the better for them?* If God had vouchsafed them these oracles by a *peculiar Title*, a *Covenant-title*, it would (in likelihood) have beene otherwise. Seeing therefore so many did not believe, it followes that eyther it was no peculiar priviledg to them to enjoy the ordinances by covenant, whereas others enjoyed them by providence onely: or else that Gods faithfulnessse fayled in bestowing that mercy upon them by Covenant, which they were never the better for.

The Apostle answers this objection thus. *What then? what if some did not believe? shall their unbeliefs make the faith if God of none effect? q. d.* The *priviledge of the Jew*, in the enjoyment of Ordinances, was continued to the Church, by Gods faithfulnessse, the unbeliefs of some notwithstanding; and *their owne misimprovement* of that mercy justly exposed them to the same condemnation, *notwithstanding them*; which the Gentiles, upon the account of sinning against the Law of nature, and glimmerings of providentiall

dentiall light, underwent *without them*. So that though divers of them perished under them through unbelieve, yet Gods Covenant in the vouchsafement of them was entrie and unbroken notwithstanding. Which Argument hee pursues copiously, and connexeth it with the precedent Chapter in the following verses. In like manner may I say concerning the *Children of Pædobaptists*, their priviledge in the peculiar right they have to converting ordinances is not at all impayred by the inefficacy of those ordinances, upon any, or any number of them. It is their priviledge to enjoy them, and it will bee the aggravation of their guilt that they do not improve them. And although they have a peculiar right to the blessing of ordinances, as well as the ordinances themselves; yet (because this right, is, (as the Covenant is that derives it) externall) it becomes ineffectuall to many, through their owne neglect of seeking to God in his owne way for the obtaining thereof. Besides, (to the shame of many of us it may bee spoken) divers parents among us do not understand, and others, (out of dissatisfaction as to their owne Covenant-Interest) *dare* not, or through sinfull neglect *do* not plead with God for their Children as they have sufficient warrant to do.

I cannot but acknowledge, *Sir*, that to mee there seemes somewhat more in this present discourse of yours, then is usually considered, or then I have met withall heretofore. But, I hope, you will allow mee, in your wonded candour, the liberty of pausing a while upon a matter which I never had occasion to study before; ere

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*After.*



I declare my selfe fully satisfied therein ; and in the meane time proceed in your maine Argument.

*Pædo.*

God forbid , I should force any mans beliefe , especially in a subject wherein I my selfe am but an *Essayer* , and desirous rather to bolt out that truth , which I suppose , lyes in these notions , then to determine magisterially , concerning them. I shall therefore willingly gratify your tender-  
nesse , and commendable shynesse of beliefe upon first hearing , by leaving them to your consideration ; and proceed according to your desire. And here I shal aske you a Question ; (seeing I have given you an hint concerning promises of blessing upon ordinances , as peculiar to the Church) concerning *promises of conversion* , or , (as wee usually call them) *promises of the first grace* , concerning the *changing of the heart* , &c. And that is this. *To whom thinke you do such promises belong ? To those within the Church , or those that are without it ?*

*Aster.*

Surely all the promises , are founded on Christ , who is the *corner-stone* of all saving Truths : & the promises that you speake of , are reckoned by the Spirit of God as a principall part of the *Covenant of grace* , in two eminent Scriptures , *Ier. 31. 33.* and *Hebr. 8. 10.* and so can bee made to none but such as are under that Covenant , and by consequence must not bee extended beyond the Church.

*Pædo.*

You say well , for an *alien from the Commonwealth of Israel* is also a *stranger from the Covenants of promise* , *Eph. 2. 12.* and so no promise of the Covenant belongs to any one , that is not a Church-

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Church-member. Bee you then your selfe judge, whether the principles that exclude Infants of believing parents, out of Covenant with God, and out of all Church-relation, or those that admit them to both, give the more comfortable hopes of conversion to them. Wee say that they are not only under a *providentiall capacity* of conversion, as meere heathens are, but they are under a *Covenant-Capacity*, because within that number to whom the promises of renewing grace belong.

But, *Sir*, now it comes to my mind, I thinke I must recall my former concession: for are there not promises of converting grace made to the heathen world? and doth not the Apostle *Paul* reckon the successe of his ministry among the Gentiles, as a fruit or gracious accomplishment of those promises, *Rom. 15. 9, 10, 11, 12.* in many instances? How then, can it bee true which you affirme, that promises of converting grace, belong only to Church members?

Very well; Except you can make it appeare that those scriptures you mention, and others like, are *promises*, or at least, come under the proper notion of promises, made to them who are the persons mentioned in them.

For my part, I looke on them rather as *prophecies* of the conversion of the Gentiles, then *promises*; or, if *promises* at all, yet *promises* directed to the *Jewes* concerning the *Gentiles*, and importing no more, but that God would in time performe his grand-promise to Abraham, *that in him should all the nations of the earth bee blessed*; to wit, by sending Christ to take humane nature

*After.*

*Pædo.*



Luc. 2. 32.

See more  
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Jam. 5. 16.

nature from his loynes, who was to bee a *light to the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel*. And so notwithstanding the Scriptures you mention, you have no reason to recall your former concession, *that all converting promises are made to none but those that are in Covenant*; for prophecies of conversion may belong to the Heathen Gentiles, or promises concerning them to the *Jewes*, and yet that concession mentioned stand unshaken.

Well then, Sir, in stead of *revoking my concession*, I shall give that honour to the satisfaction you have given mee herein, as to *revoke my revocation*; and desire you to give your selfe no farther diversion, from what you farther intend mee upon that subject.

I remember, I am yet in consideration of the advantages for conversion, held forth by the principles of Infant-baptisme, in relation to *externall meanes* of conversion. You see how they establish a peculiar right to Ordinances, and promises annexed to them. I have something more to say to this head, & that is concerning the *prayers of the Church*. Are the prayers of the Church (thinke you) any meanes tending to the furtherance of conversion, or no?

Yes, undoubtedly. For if the *effectuall prayer of one righteous man availe much*, if it be *servent* (as James saith) surely the prayers of many righteous men *assembled in Christs name* must needs bee far more prevalent. And if so large a promise bee made to *two or three agreeing together what to aske*, as there is, *Matth. 18. 19.* how much more may wee thinke God obli-

ged to the prayers of the *universall Church upon earth*?

And for whom thinke you is the strength of all the prayers of the *Catholick Church* offered up?

Surely, for those of the *same body* with themselves.

You say well. For although the Church by the common tye of humanity, pray for *all men*, according to the command, *1 Tim. 2. 1.* yet those that are most upon their hearts in their prayers, are those of the *same flock and fold* with themselves. Prayer *with*, and for one another, is a part of *Church-Communion*, and (as such) it properly belongs to those that have right of Communion. And (accordingly) I make no question, but that in the inmost desires of all true Christians, the conversion of those that are nearest related, whether in naturall or Christian bonds, is most passionately wished for; and (by consequence) the little ones borne in the Church, the hope of the derivation of Christs Kingdome to succeeding generations. So, that those principles, that will not allow such persons, a standing in the Church, do what they can, to disinterest them in the very creame, and marrow of the whole Churches prayers. You, for your part have children, and therefore let mee aske you but this one serious Question, *If my poore prayers have any estimation with you, had you rather your children should share in my prayers, onely, upon the account of that common charity, whence I pray for the conversion of heathens; or that speciall charity, which moves mee to pray for*

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*Pædo.*

*After.*

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*the conversion of those of mine owne flock to whom I am related in the Lord?*

*After.*

Much rather, *Sir*, upon the *later* account.

*Pædo.*

And in this, *Sir*, I cannot gratify you, but only upon the account of their *Church-membership*. Did I not believe them church-members, my charity to them, & so my prayers for them, would extend no farther to them then to other Heathens.

*After.*

I pray God, then, grant my children, the prayers of *Pædo-baptists*; for it seemes the *Charity of Anabaptists*, upon their principles, cannot possibly, but be *cold* towards them; & I thinke those godly mens prayers will do them most good, whose charity is largest towards them. But *Sir*, there is yet one thing sticks with mee in relation to all that hath beene said concerning the *externall helps to conversion*, in the case in hand. And that is this, if there be granted such an Interest of Infants borne in the Church to externall meanes of conversion, as they grow up into any capacity to make use of them, upon the account of *Church-membership*; and this *Church-membership* (according to your principles) is *before*, and (therefore) may be *without Baptisme*; How doth the addition of *Baptisme* to our Infants contribute any thing to this Interest, which it seems is a right annexed to *Church-membership*, without any necessary respect to *Baptisme*?

*Pædo.*

To grant what you say; yet is not *Baptisme* uselesse to the efficacy of those ordinances, and helps which a person hath right to, *before Baptisme*. For *Baptisme* being *that ordinance*, in which *that Covenant* (according to our principles)

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ples) is sealed; in pursuance whereof God gives converting ordinances, and Instruments to the Church; *that Covenant* in which God promiseth converting grace to them; and lastly, *that Covenant* in the strength whereof the Church prays for the conversion of its members in speciall: Nay more, Baptisme being *that ordinance*, in which those who are *de jure* Churchmembers, are solemnly admitted into it, and so put under the churches peculiar care *de facto*: the Covenant, so sealed to them, may bee pleaded for them with more strength, from the solemnity of its ratification; carryes with it a more rationall assurance of the Efficacy of its ordinances; and the prayers of the church are more solemnly engaged thereby to those so admitted, they being thenceforward, accounted members *legally invested* with all the priviledges of that holy Corporation. But the efficacy of Baptisme, in the use of it, with relation to its Infant-administration, will appeare more fully in the *next branch* of this Argument, which I shall, (in case, I find no farther *remora* from your dissatisfactions) proceed unto.

I pray you therefore *Sir*, proceed to the *internall motives*, which the principles, and practise of Infant Baptisme afford to conversion, which as I remember was the *second head* propounded by you, in your entrance into the present subject.

The *motives from infant-Baptisme* tending to the furtherance of *conversion*, are either,

{ Supposed by it,      Or,  
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*Pædo.*



I.  
Joh. 16. 8.

I. Motives *supposed by it*, are the three *converting convictions*, viz.

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 1 *Sinne*; and that *Originall*; the  
     sinne of nature, the *plague of*  
     *the heart*.  
 2 *Righteousnesse*.  
 3 *Judgment*.

pag. 25.

[1] The cleare and full *conviction of Originall sinne*, concerning which I have given you an hint in my former discourse, as to the [*quòd sit*,] that Infant-Baptisme holds forth such a *conviction*. I shall farther enlarge that head here, and improve it to our present purpose, by shewing you how it doth it, and how it furthers *conversion* thereby.

You are therefore to consider, what I believe you understand, that the *Notion of Originall sinne* implyes three things.

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 1 The *imputation* of Adams first sinne.  
 2 The *want* of Originall righteousness.  
 3 The *corruption* of our whole nature.

1. That every person, even within the Church, is borne under the *guilt of Adams sin*, is cleerly evinced from the *ingrafting notion* of Infant-Baptisme, and the Covenant therein sealed; For what need of *grafting* into a new stock, a *second Adam*, but upon this evident supposition, that there is no safe abiding for any person, under the old Adams Covenant? The Covenant of the Creation made with him, as a *common person*, comprehending all his posterity; and they all *sinning in him*, (so some render  $\epsilon\phi' \omega$ , in that place *Rom. 5. 12.*) were, upon that account, liable to the curse and wrath  
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of God as soone as they were borne. What thoughts (therefore) more proper, can the consideration of Infant-Baptisme suggest, to any serious spirit, either by reflection upon the administration of it to his owne person, or view of it as administred to others, then such as these? Lord, I have a serious occasion administred this day, to remember the rock whence I am hewen, and the hole of the pit whence I am digged. I see, in this Sacrament, a sonne of Adam, made a sonne of Abraham, and thereby engrafted into a new stock, the Covenant of a second Adam. I see propitiating, justifying, pardoning blood, sacramentally applied to this Infant. Wouldst thou not have mee conclude from this speaking administration, what a damning guilt, the most innocent age brings from the very wombe! Who could justly have blamed thee if thou shouldst have taken yonder Infant out of his first swadling-cloathes, ere ever the breasts gave him suck, and turned him into hell! And was not I once such another? My parents when they presented mee to baptisme in my Infancy, confessed mee borne in sin, and a child of wrath by nature, as well as others; and thy word, when it appointed mee this Bethesda to bee washed in, judicially pronounced mee so; and ever since that time, in owning that Baptisme, I have confessed my selfe so. Lord, how many yeares have I lived in a condemned condition! What a long reprieve have I enjoyed! Where had I beene ere this time, had I dyed, as I might, divers years since! And how can I safely continue in that condition, without suing out the pardon, at that time, graciously, but conditionally, sealed



led to mee. If imputed guilt endangered me then without a Saviour, how many renewed hazards have I runne ever-since, by adding so much personall guilt thereunto! Why do I not then hasten to the City of refuge; sue out, by a saving faith, that gracious Act of oblivion, then sealed to mee on thy part, upon a sacramentall faith! Hye thee, my soule, hye thee quickly, from the Tents of the Old Adam, and his posterity, lest thou bee swallowed up in their common-condemnation. I am graciously, and seasonably, in this administration, warned to fly from the wrath to come, before that wrath come so unavoydably, that there will bee no flying from it. Lord, 'tis too long, already, that I have adventured upon thy patience. Had'st not thou bene a long-suffering God, I had suffered long since what my sins have deserved: and I shall deserve to suffer as long as thou art God, the revenge of abused patience, if I continue longer, in so desperate, and wilball, so provoking a condition.

2. The want of Originall righteousness, (another branch that wee ordinarily comprehend under Originall sin) is no lesse lively presented to our consideration in this ordinance, and that from the same notion of the ingrafting nature thereof. To bee ingrafted into Christ, is to receive that relation to him, by which the righteousness and benefits of Christ become ours; as by engrafting, the life and sap of the root, is the branches: and that very act of grace in God, by which hee ingrafts us into Christ, signifies to us that wee are of our selves branches that have no life, nor sap in them to enable them to beare any

any fruit; Nothing that renders us capable of any saving mercy or priviledg from God, but what wee receive from Christ Jesus. Infant-Baptisme (now) fastens this conviction, even with relation to that Age. *Alas!* (may a considering Christian say upon the occasion of this administration) *How little do those poore soules understand themselves, that boast of a good heart, and a good faith towards God, ever since they were borne! How evident and undeniable a conviction is there of the folly and ignorance of that conceit, in yonder Infant, and that speaking ordinance! There is a litle Innocent Babe, as wee use to say, (ma'tis true, as to actuall sinne) yet God tells mee aloud in this ordinance, that without the imputed righteousnessse of Christ, hee is not capable of acceptance with him, or entituled to eternall life. This child never wronged any one, never committed any act of drunkennesse, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, uncleannesse, nay never committed one of these sinnes, or the like, so much as in thought; and yet all this, God tells mee by this ordinance, will not stand him in stead for justification in the sight of God. And how then dare I, or any other under the guilt of so many actuall sins, plead our owne righteousnessse, for the matter of our justification? what is the thing wee call good nature, if nature in the very bud, nay blossome, bee thus voyd of goodnesse? Accept mee, Lord, in the righteousnessse of him, whose nature from the wombe was sanctified, and whose life to the grave was holy, seeing in its owne personall righteousnessse, the most innocent Age, shall not bee justified. And O my soule, that hast in Bap-*



Gal. 3.

*tisme put on Christ sacramentally, make speed now and put him on savingly: get that garment to cover thy nakednesse, seeing the great:st measure of personall innocency attainable on earth, is a covering too narrow to hide an Infant of a span long, from the pure eyes of that justice, that cannot behold the least iniquity.*

3. The corruption of our whole nature receives no lesse convincing evidence from Infant-Baptisme, and that from that notion of Baptisme, wherein it holds forth *sanctifying grace*, and the *obsignation of the promises* exhibiting it. The application of Baptismall water in the name of God, by his Minister, clearely shewes, that the spring of all personall, as well, as imputed righteousness is from above; and in the administration thereof to Infants, preacheth aloud that Doctrine of our Saviour to Nicodemus, That *whatever is borne of the flesh is flesh*: and that *except a man bee new-borne, from above, hee cannot enter into the Kingdome of God*. That the first-birth delivers us into the world with corrupted, polluted natures; our soules being as deeply stained in the *bloud of our nativity*, as our bodies. For what need of *washing*, where all is cleane without it? In vaine, did God appoint an ordinance to bee a *laver of regeneration*, if naturall generation were so pure, as not to need it. Were the hearts of those that are present at such an ordinance serious, mee thinkes, no child should be baptized, but they should reflect upon themselves this conviction also. I would faine every person in the Congregation, at such an Administration, should entertaine, his owne soule with

Answer  
Jo. 3. 3.

with such thoughts as these.

Lord, doth not this administration, shew me my selfe in a true, unflattering glasse? Canst thou tell me more plainly, then hereby thou dost, what a filthy, polluted nature I have? Had I never had experience of the foulness of the streame, I cannot, upon this occasion, but (by reflection upon mine owne infant-Baptisme) see enough mud in the very fountaine. Surely, I was (as this child) shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive mee, and I, as well as hee, derived an hereditary leprosy from the loynes of my parents. And who can bring a cleane thing out of an unclean? Surely, Lord, these waters have not cleaned themselves by running. The farther they have spread themselves, the fouler I find by sad experience, they are become. What a monster of pollution am I growne, by the continued practise of sin? How many puddles have I wallowed in, since that filthy sinke of my birth-pollution in which thou foundest mee, when thy Minister washed mee in sacramentall water? And is it not then high time for mee, to make out after sacramentall grace to cleanse my filthy Nature? Had I not need to apply my self to those promises whereby I may bee made partaker of a new Nature? Lord, I come to the fountaine opened in the Gospell, for sin, and for uncleannesse. O sprinkle cleane water upon mee; regenerate mee, (as thou hast already with water sacramentally, so) with the Spirit savingly. Bestow upon mee now, Lord, the inward, and spirituall part of my Baptisme; sanctifie mee, in pursuance of thy promise sealed therein, by the word; and present my soule to thy

Pl. 51. 4.

Eph. 5.  
26, 17.



thy selfe, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Loath mee not for that, O Lord, for which I loath my selfe; but purge my loathsome heart and life, and make mee a lovely object of thy owne love.

Thus you see, how Infant-Baptisme, supposeth Originall sinne, in all the branches of it, and by conviction thereof, (*by way of Motive*) furthers conversion.

*After.*

Surely, Sir, very few are acquainted with the holy Art of drawing such convincing consequences from Infant-Baptisme. But I hope, I shall henceforward, for mine owne part, see more of my heart in the glasse of that ordinance then heretofore, having received such information from you. But Sir, is there any thing else supposed in Infant-baptisme, as such, to further conversion in the same way, viz. *by motive*, inducement, or encouragement?

*Pædo.*

[2] Yes, (there is; and that indeed, without which all convictions of sin will do no good,) viz. [*A conviction of righteousness*] Infant-Baptisme doth not only preach *Law*, but *Gospel*. The free grace of God to poore guilty sinners, exhibiting the righteousness of Christ without any worth, or worke of ours, is lively shadowed out in that ordinance (which is the next motive after conviction of sin, to prevayle with a poore sinner, to renounce his sinne, and turne to God.) For this takes away the grand discouragement, which, upon a full, and powerfull conviction of sin, usually is cast in by Satan to hinder the worke of saving conversion. Will God (dost thou thinke) entertaine so unworthy a wretch as by thine owne

owne Conscience thou art convicted to be? Indeed hee invites sinners to come to Christ, but there are certaine qualifications, which thou hast not, pre-required; and dost thou thinke that God will receive a wretch so utterly voyd of any good as thou art? Here comes in properly the consideration of the freenesse of pardoning and saving mercy; invitations and encouragements, to come to the well of life freely, without money or price; and those declarations of Gods precious intendments towards sinners, whom hee intends to draw to Christ, which wee call *absolute promises*, wherein God undertakes for those very qualifications and dispositions, which hee requireth in us. Of which more anon.

Now the *promises of free pardon* of sinnes to such sinners, as are intended in them, and those gracious *absolute promises*, are signally exhibited in Baptisme under the *Infant-application* of it. Hath God said, *hee will pardon sin for his owne names sake*, that he will *heale backslidings*, and *love pardoned back-sliders freely*? that *whoever will*, shall partake of the water of life freely? &c. I cannot tell what more-effectuall assurance here of God gives, then in *Infant Baptisme*. Baptism is ordained by God, as a *signe*, and *seale of remission of sins*. And so also is the other Sacrament, in which the blood of Christ is applyed for *remission of sins*. So that here, in the generall nature, both the sacraments agree though with this difference; that the sacrament of Baptisme sealeth *initiall remission*, the sacrament of the Lords supper *renewed and continued remission*. But, (for *Infant-Baptisme*) it sealeth *remission of sins*, under

Rev. 22. 17  
11. 55. 1.

Is. 43. 25.

Hol. 14. 4.

Apoc. 22.

17.



der a more peculiar consideration; viz. in the *freeneſſe*, and *grace* of it. Baptiſme at riper years, and the Lords Supper, ſignifie and ſeal the ſame remiſſion, but the perſons preſuppoſed to bee ſo and ſo qualified. But in Infant-Baptiſme, as in Infant-circumciſion heretofore, there is a lively representation of remiſſion of ſins and acceptance with God through the imputation of *righteouſneſſe without workes*, (as the Apoſtles phraſe is, Rom. 4. 6.) That grand commendation of Gods love mentioned Rom. 5. 6, 7, 8, &c. in *Chriſts dying for us when wee were ſinners, ungodly, without ſtrength, and in the reconciliation of enemies*, is lively exhibited in Infant-Baptiſme. That adminiſtration, in my Judgment, beſpeaks all ſinners thus: *Lo here, all yee that looke on, is there any love like this love, that extends an act of grace and pardon to a filthy polluted ſinner, one that hath no worth to deſerve it, no power to requite it? Are there no poore ſoules here, that dare not lay hands upon Chriſt, and pardon, becauſe of their owne unworthineſſe; that are in doubt whether Chriſt will receive them, till they bee thus, and thus graciouſly qualified, as they propound to themſelves to bee? Soul, if thou thinke to bring any thing to Chriſt, but thy ſores, and thy diſeaſes, and thy wants, and thy weakeneſſes, thou diſparageſt his grace and endangereſt thine owne ſalvation. Behold in this adminiſtration, what a paterne of pardoning mercy, God exhibites for thine encouragement. Here is guilt confeſſed, and unworthineſſe acknowledged, and impotency ad inability apparent. What is there in this little embleme of want and weakeneſſe, that*

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that may bee supposed, to incline God to any thoughts of fauour? Here is the bloud of sprinkling for remission of sins, sacramentally applyed to one that cannot come under the suspicion of any personall worthinesse. Come then, thou selfe-discouraged sinner, plead thy Infant-Baptisme, for free grace, and gratuitous forgivenesse. Aske God (With reverence) whether thou bee now more unworthy to receive the mercy, and grace sealed, then thou at that time wer'st to receive the seale of it? Aske him, (With humility) whether hee did not seale to thee at that time, to tell thee, that hee lookes not upon what man deserves, when hee intends to bestow his owne grace? whether hee will not have thee now enter into the Kingdome of heaven, (by remission of sins, that opens the doore of it) as a little child; who when thou wer'st a little child indeed, opened the Kingdome of heaven to thee, in Baptisme, the seale of that remission? Say, Lord, I acknowledge my selfe unworthy, as then I was, let not my unworthinesse bee a barre to mee now, which thy Sacramentall grace then broke through, with [a non-obstante.] Let not that barre shut mee out from the grace of the covenant, which could not exclude me from the seale of it.

[3] And as much may bee said for conviction of judgment, from Infant-Baptisme, (if the word [judgment] bee taken for [inherent grace,] as it is probably, 1s.42. 3.) It futhers conversion, by shewing where all true grace, which the soule by the convictions before mentioned sees a want of, is to bee had.

Now, that baptismall water signifyes, the  
grace



*grace of the Spirit*, as well as the *blond of Christ*, I know no man that makes any doubt. If any do, they may do well to consider, what is meant in that Phrase of being *borne againe of water, and of the Spirit*. Joh 3. 5. Which phrase either denotes the necessity of the *spirituall grace* of baptisme to salvation; as superadded to the *material water* of that sacrament, (not asser-ting an absolute necessity of baptisme to salva-tion, but supposing Baptisme, and requiring more then baptisme to salvation;) q. d. [in vaine doe men thinke meerely, by thronging to Johns Baptisme, to *flee from the wrath to come*; if there be no more then baptisme, there is no more ca-pacity of salvation, then there was without it. Except a man bee regenerated not only of water, but of the Spirit also, hee cannot see the Kingdome of God: Or else it is, *ἐν ᾧ διὰ ὕδατος, water, and the Spirit*, for the *water of the Spirit*, or the *Spirits baptisme*. Now if *Baptismal water*, were not the *emblem* (and so, sacramentall signe) of the *regeneration of the Spirit*, the connexion betweene them in either sense, were very im-proper. Such an expresseion wee have also Eph. 5. 26. where wee have the *Love of Christ to the Church* set downe as an imitable precedent to Husbands in their love to their wives. *Husbands, love your Wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himselfe for it, That hee might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*. In which Text wee may note, (1) The death of Christ, the thing held forth in Baptisme; *Hee gave himselfe for it*. (2.) The end why Christ gave himselfe, *That hee might*

might sanctify and cleanse it. (3.) The *meanes* by which hee doth it, viz. 1. *externall* with the *washing of water*. 2. *internall* (superadded to that to make it effectuell) *by the word*.

So that by the apparent Analysis of this Text, it is plaine, that *Baptismall water* doth signify *cleansing, sanctifying*, and (by consequence) *renewing grace*: and that not *only* as a *duty* therein required of us, that wee are thereby engaged to *cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of flesh and spirit*, as is his phrase elsewhere; but also, (and principally) as a *grace* thereby bestowed by God; for it is not said, [*that wee might sanctify and cleanse our selves*,] or, [*that it (the Church) might sanctify and cleanse it selfe*,] but, [*that hee might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water*.] And then, this is also plaine, That the efficacy of this water to *sanctify and cleanse*, is from the word. Here is all the Question; What word is here meant, to which this sanctifying and cleansing vertue, with relation to the *washing of water*, is attributed? The word, (relating to sacraments) is eyther, the word of *institution*, the ordination of God, appointing them as means to their proper ends: or the word of *promise* annexed to the Institution, to assure us of benefit by it. Now most Protestant interpreters, (and Calvin in the *var*) understand it of this last, the word of *promise* sealed by baptisme. It seemes then, that there is a promise of sanctifying grace annexed to Baptisme, and in the vertue of this promise Baptisme sanctifies. A parallell place to this, is, Tit. 3. 5. according to his mercy hee saved us by the washing

2 Cor. 7. 1.

*Verbum promissionem significat, quâ vi & usus signi explicatur.*

Calv. in locum.

Sic Beza in loc.



Larger  
Catech. of  
the Assem-  
bly.

Non dubito  
quin saltem  
ad Baptis-  
mum allu-  
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Calv. in  
Tit. 3.

*washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Where (to suppose, (as some do) that the *washing of regeneration*, and the *renewing of the holy Ghost*, are the same thing, yet) that there is an evident allusion to the signe of baptisme in the metaphor of *washing*, is so cleare, that, the late Assembly of Divines quote this place, as well as the former mentioned, to prove that *baptisme is a signe and seale of regeneration*: and Calvin upon the place professeth *hee doth not any way doubt, but that the Apostle manifestly alludes to Baptisme*. But to mee, (and I am sure I have divers of eminent note voting with mee in that interpretation) it seemes also very probable, that the Apostle joynes these two, the *externall sacramentall washing*, and the *inward renovation*, which that signifies and seales. In a word, when I consider how often sanctifying grace is expressed in the Scripture, by *cleansing*, and (the meanes thereof) *washing with water*; I cannot straighten a sacramentall element so as to exclude it from one principall part of its Scripturall signification, and that founded in so apparent an Analogy and resemblance as (in the point in hand) there is betweene baptisimall water and the renewing of the H. Ghost.

I thinke I may by this time take it for granted, that Baptisme is not only a seale of regeneration, on *our parts*, obliging us to the *duty*; but also on *Gods*, engaging *him* to bestow the *grace* of it. Which, if it bee granted, (as I question not but (by most orthodox) it will) it will follow that (seeing the *seale* necessarily supposeth the *promise*, as the *writing* to w<sup>ch</sup> it is annexed) the *promises*

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mises of regenerating grace are sealed in Baptisme, which promises wee call, *absolute promises*, or *promises of the first grace*. Now, because the administration hereof *at riper yeares*, supposeth, as I have formerly told you, (at least, by the profession of faith and repentance) this *initiall regeneration* already wrought; therefore to persons admitted at that Age, Baptisme seales properly, (according to their capacity) the grace of *progressive regeneration*: but to *Infants*, (whose *actuall regeneration* is not supposed in the administration) it seales *initiall regeneration*, properly, and the promises exhibiting it. And I do no way doubt, but that *circumcision* of old did the same. It signified *the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*, as may bee inferred from the Apostle; Col. 2. 11. and that promise Deut. 30. ver. 6. *I will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed*, sounds so like, *the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*, in the place forenamed; that it is to mee more then probable, that God therein expresseth a *spirituall grace* in *sacramentall termes*, to shew, that, that sacrament was a seale of that grace. Adde to this, that the phrase of [*circumcision of the heart*] as required over and above *the circumcision of the flesh* to make a true Jew, or son of Abraham, by the Apostle, Rom. 2 ult. as also, the phrase of [*an uncircumcised heart*, and *uncircumcised in heart*] applied to the Jewes, by way of exprobration (*viz.* as charging them with the want of that grace, which the outward ordinance sealed, whiles yet they boasted in a barren ordinance;) seeme to speake aloud such neerenesse of relation be-

Jer 9. 26.  
Act. 7. 51.



tweene the one and the other, [*sacramentall circumcision*, and *heart-renovation*] as is betweene the *outward signe* and the *inward grace*. Now, as to the *adult Jewes* and *profelytes* who were circumcised, the promises of heart-circumcision, were ratified, according to their present capacity; viz. to assure the conferring of more, and more *degrees* of inward renovation: so, to *their Infants*, they cannot but be interpreted according to their capacity; and so circumcision, to them, sealed those promises, in the utmost extent of them, and principally, the grace of first regeneration, which lyes most plaine in the *Termes*, and is legible in the very foreheads of them.

Adde to this, further, that, Baptisme (being a sacrament of *ingrafting* and *admission* into the church) most properly must bee supposed to exhibite *that grace*, by which we are so *ingrafted* and *admitted* into the mysticall body of Christ. Now wee are not *ingrafted* into Christ, but when wee are made *living members*; and that is not, till wee have a principle of life infused into us; which life wee receive in the infusion of *initiall grace*. So that Baptisme being Gods seale to our admission into Christs body, is a seale of that grace by which wee are thus admitted.

Once more, Baptisme being (as it is generally granted amongst orthodox Divines) a *seale of the Covenant of grace*, either seales the *whole* Covenant, or but *part* of it. If but *part* of it, let any one assigne clearly from the Scripture what part it seals, and what not. If the *whole*, (as I

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conceive, when the Scripture layes the promise as the ground of Baptisme, it means the Covenant, *I will bee thy God and the God of thy seed*, in its uttermost latitude and extent) then, the promises of initiall grace as part of the Covenant.

Nay lastly, there being but *two* seales of the Covenant of Grace) it is necessary, that either *some part* of the Covenant is altogether unsealed, or else that one of those two seales must ratifie it whatsoever it bee. That any part of the Covenant, wants the ratification of a seale altogether, I suppose no one will affirme. Now, I conceive, the sacrament of the Lords supper doth not confirme that part of it, which exhibits the first grace, because in the nature of it, it is a Sacrament of nourishment; and so necessarily supposeth life in the person participating thereof. It remaines then, that the said promises of the first grace are sealed up in Baptisme, and most eminently in Infant-Baptisme, according to the grounds before layd. Which, as to mee, it is a rationall prooffe of the lawfulnessse of the application of Baptisme to Infants; so it much furthers the application of the doctrine of it, if improved by serious meditation. To help you wherein I shall hasten, as fast as your farther dissatisfaction, or irresolution shall permit mee.

But I pray, *Sir*, give mee leave to interrupt you a little, ere you proceed any farther; for in my judgment, there is a considerable rub lyes in your way, which if you remove, your haste will bee the more safe, and that is this. It may bee questioned, [*how Baptisme can seale*

*After.*



*promises of the first grace?* ] upon a twofold account.

*First*, because it seemes improper to call those scriptures, *promises*, which exhibit God intending to bestow the *first grace*. For promises, are made to some persons or other, by whom they are pleadable. Now that which renders any promise pleadable to any person, is some *nominall* or *virtuall* mention of him, in the grant. But to the *promises of initiall grace* (as you call them) there is no such specification, or nomination reall or virtuall annexed, by vertue of which any particular person may plead them. Nor indeed, can there bee. For, either that specification must bee *Election*, or the *purchase of Ch.ist*, or some *qualification* or other in the person, making him a fit receiuer, when another is not. *Election*, is a title not pleadable by any, but by speciall revelation, which I suppose, you will not grant. The *purchase of Christ* is not pleadable by any, except upon evidence; that in that purchase Christ intended him in particular, and that is as darke and unpleadable a Title in this case as Election, except you hold *universall redemption* in a latitude beyond most men, viz. as including an *universall purchase of grace*; and yet then also, it were not pleadable by any one, more then another. As for *personall qualifications*, they must either bee *gracious* or *common*. *Gracious*, they cannot bee, for then some grace would bee supposed to bee before the first. *Common*, they cannot bee, for then *common grace* would bee admitted, as a qualification for *speciall grace*, which is downeright Pelagianisme, against which

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I have often heard you zealously declare.

*Secondly*, Because if it do so, then either to *all* or to *some*. If to *all*, then how come all that are baptized, not to have it? If to *some*, assigne those some, and distinguish them from others.

I willingly embrace your counsell; and I assure you the rubs you lay, are considerable ones; but by Gods assistance, I shall endeavour the removall of them.

*Pædo.*

It seemes by your discourse, that you allow not the Terme of *promises of initiall grace*: and indeed I have not beene, and I will not bee overfond of it, or any other Terme, if any man can give me a better, and make it of common use as this is. Meane while, *Loquendum ut vulgus*, wee must speake as others do, if wee will bee understood. I had rather use a lesse proper or lesse significant expression, then bee suspected of innovating *doctrines* by innovating *Termes*. Yet I must tell you, it is not improper to call that a promise which is pleadable by no one person in particular; and as these are made to the Church, so they are proper promises. For a promise may bee made to a *Corporation*; and there is nothing more usuall then such promises in Scripture made to the whole Church, so as to bee fulfilled to particulars included in that Corporation, according to Gods owne will and pleasure. Such is the promise of *continuation of Gospel-ministry and ordinances*, and *Christs presence in them to the worlds End*, Mat. 28. 19, 20. and such is the promise of preserving the Church against the *gates of Hell*, and many others. Which promises are fulfilled, and shall bee to

Mat. 16.  
18.



the whole church in some or other parts of it, to the worlds end; and that according to the rule of Gods secret decree only. Now although no particular Church or ministry can challenge God upon these promises, under any peculiar claime, yet (God having not declared his secret purpose to performe them to this, and not to that particular ministry or society) they may all plead them, as branches of that body to which they are made; yet so, as to leave him to his liberty, to do as hee pleaseth according to his secret determination. So, (with submission to better judgments) do I conceive those *promises of initial grace*, to bee made to the *whole body* of the Church; and my reason is, because I find them, so drawne up, without any particular description of such and such persons in the Church. Nay I find the body of the Church mentioned in divers (if not all) those promises. *I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, &c.* Deut. 30. 6. *Israel, and the seed of Israel*, were termes then commensurate to the whole visible Church of God. So, *This is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, I will put my lawes into their mind, &c.* Jer 31. 33. Heb. 8. 10. *So I will give you a new heart &c. and I will put my Spirit within you, and yee shall dwell in the land that I gave to your Fathers:* so that the promise is made to the whole *Nationall Church* of the Jewes, as such. Now the Apostle telling us that the *partition wall is broken downe*, and wee are *coheyrers with them*, Ephes. 3. 6. and Christian Jewes and Gentiles being now become one Catholick Church; these

pro

promises extend to the Gentile-Church in the same latitude; and are accordingly pleadable by the *whole Church* now, as then, for its visible Members, and by those members for *themselves* in particular, as parts of the whole.

And therefore, you see a particular Christian need not bee driven to plead *Election*, for the performance of these promises to himself, or his child, but only the Covenant of grace, as made with the Church visible for either, upon the account of membership therein. Nor need hee plead any *personall Qualification*, for this only *relative qualification* is sufficient without any *personall* one whether *gracious*, or *common*, to bring him so farre within the reach of those promises, as to afford him a good plea for a share in them, for himself or his.

Yea, upon the same account, may hee ground his plea upon the very *purchase of Christ*, without either supposing that *Christ dyed to purchase grace for all*; or a *revelation*, that *Christ purchased it for him in particular*. For, however Christ knew whom hee had chosen, and had their names engraven upon his heart when hee suffered, so that none can *eventually* obtaine any saving fruit of his death, but those so intended by him; yet, seeing Christs church visible upon earth, is the first subject of all promises, and declarations concerning the benefits of his purchase, and particularly concerning this part of his purchase, *sanctification*, as hath beene before shewed) every particular member may plead in the name of Christ for the grace so promised, taking it as granted, that there is no legall obstruction against him, more then another in the same capacity.



And thus you see, I have in a few words removed the difficultyes which obstructed my passage. What hinders now, but that I should dis-  
 misse you with some applicatory notes upon the whole matter to render it further usefull to you?

*After.*

Some things more I have yet to say to you, ere I can fairely dismisse you to that part of the taske you have imposed upon your selfe, for my farther advantage: but I suppose they will not need to hold you so long as may render, either you or mee over-likely to bethink the time spent upon them, though I as much long, to bee, as you can, to make mee partaker of the applicatory close you intend. Wherefore first, I intreate you to helpe mee to make use of the doctrine of the obfignation of promises of the first grace in Infant-Baptisme.

*Pædo.*

The use is easily deducible from the premises. And it is this, that if the doctrine bee true, a godly parent for his child, and such a child (coming to capacity of understanding) for himselfe, may plead for sanctifying grace with more assurance; having the promises in which it is exhibited, sealed to him as a church-member in his infant-Baptisme.

*After.*

Next, *Sir*, I crave leave to mind you, that you are yet in my debt for a *second ranke of motives* furthering conversion from the consideration of Infant-Baptisme, viz. such as are *suggested from* the after consideration thereof, at yeares of discretion.

*Pædo.*

Indeed, I had almost forgotten that head, till you minded mee of it: and therefore I thank you for your seasonable intimation. You have  
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heard what is *supposed* in Infant-Baptisme, that may afford meditations tending to conversion. Other converting considerations there are which may bee no lesse effectually drawne from some things relating to Infant-Baptisme, and its Covenant, though not alike *intrinsecall* to its very nature, and essence, as the former. And those are.

II.

1. A consideration of the mercyes vouchsafed through Infant-Baptisme, and by vertue of its Covenant.

2. A consideration of the engagement entered into by Infant-Baptisme on our parts.

The consideration of the mercyes vouchsafed through Infant-Baptisme and its Covenant, which amount to a very great reckoning, the totall summe whereof (in a word) is cast up in this, the solemne admission into the number of visible Church-members, and enstating in all the priviledges of that membership; will much enhance the value of them, and further the influence of them, in order to conversion; if you take in to aggravate them this grand circumstance, That therein there was a gracious act of anticipating or preventing mercy. *Preventing mercy*, hath alwayes by Gods people, beene looked upon, as a mercy of largest dimensions. When God is before-hand with a person, in shewing kindnesse, hee displayes the banner of free-grace all abroad; in so much as there can bee no pretension of any thing on their part to obscure it in any measure, but what comes too late to stand in competition with it.

Now in the mercy vouchsafed through Infant-Bap-



Baptisme, and its Covenant, there is a double prevention or anticipation on Gods part.

1. Hee prevents whatever good can bee supposed to proceed from us, to render him our debtour; so that that Question takes unavoydable hold of us for conviction, *Who hath first given to him?* Rom. 11. 35.

2. Hee prevents a great deale of evill, wee might, had not hee taken such early hold of us, have fallen into.

1. As the mercy vouchsafed in Infant-Baptisme and its Covenant, prevents any good that can proceed from us, it may conduce to conversion, by some such meditations as these.

*Alas! what a disingenuous heart have I, to bolt the doore against mercy; against mercy courting mee, and beseeching mee to bee happy, and that before I could so much as apprehend my selfe so miserable, as to stand in need of mercy, and therefore before I could make the least motion towards mine owne happinesse! How did infinite mercy wooe mee in my cradle, that it might bee sure to bee before hand with any merit, and so oblige mee the more to entertaine its suite, from the freenesse of that love that fixed upon mee when I had nothing lovely! Wooed mee, (said I?) nay, married mee then (sacramentally) and tooke all the Church for witnesses of it; and wooed mee ever since, for my consent to compleate the nuptials, by a voluntary surrender of my selfe, to its conjugall embraces. And how dis-ingenuous, & unkind is it in mee, to go about to annull the match, by an obstinate refusall! Had the disadvantage of this*  
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early contract beene on my part ; had I beene entituled to any such estate , as might have made mee a considerable prize , and the party laying claime to mee , capable of being raised upon my ruines ; I might with some colour of reason now plead a non est factum , and pronounce it a nullity , because done without mutuall consent. But considering what a poore forlorne creature I was , that had neither beauty , nor portion , nor any possibility of either , but what hee alone gave mee , who then made himselfe mine , that hee might by so royall and generous a love , the more to oblige me to bee his ; I can never answer it to reason , or Conscience , and (which is more) to that gracious Majesty with whom I have to do , in this weighty affayre ; if I do not with admiration , and thankfulness prostrate my selfe at his fecte , and cry out , [ Here , Lord , receive the surrender of that heart , that hath held out too long a siege against the batteryes of such infinite love , and unspeakable mercy. Pardon my obstinacyes , and heale my infirmities , and cover my deformities , and make mee all that which may make mee meete for thy company , and embraces. ]

2. As the mercy vouchsafed in Infant-baptisme and its Covenant , prevents a great deale of evill which wee might have fallen into ; so the after consideration of it , may conduce to some persons conversion by some such apprehensions as these. Ah , Lord ! How many thousands are there in the world , whose very cradles stand upon the brinke of Hell ! And so did mine too , among others , when the very guilt , and pollution of my nativity , rendered mee alike obnoxious to eternall  
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fire with others; but that thou graciously didst remove it from that dangerous standing, and set it in the confines of thy Kingdome of grace and glory. At that time didst thou lay claime to mee, & write upon my cradle, Thou art mine. Ah Lord, how many times hath Satan looked enviously and maliciously upon mee, since that day; when yet hee dared do no more, because I was thine! How many desperate dangers have I escaped, wherein death threatned mee, and hell gaped for mee, merely because I was thine! Since I came to yeares of election, (though I have beene too bad at best, yet) how much worse had I beene, had I not beene thine? Certainly, there is something peculiar in common mercyes and deliverances, for which I ought to acknowledge my selfe obliged to thee, who, as thou hast beene in Covenant with mee from my Mothers brests, so hast thou (no question) beene mindfull of that Covenant, in the dispensations of thy providence towards mee. And therefore it concernes mee to bee mindfull of my duty, to become thine graciously, by an actuell surrender of my selfe to thee, who hast made mee thine by a sacramentall covenant, and since that, layd out so many gracious providences upon mee, in pursuance thereof.

After.

But Sir, are not thousands of baptized infants taken off providentially, from the land of the living, before they come to considering yeares? And are not divers persons baptized in Infancy left to a very great height of sin, and obstinacy? So that it seemes, the ground of this converting consideration is not layd in Infant-Baptisme or the Covenant sealed therein, for  
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then it would be common to all so baptized ; but wee see plainly the contrary ; that abundance of them , are not capable of such considerations as these , as not having experience of these mercyes ; and some are , that are not in Covenant nor baptized , as Heathens children. How then impute you these mercyes to the Covenant and Infant Baptism ?

I answer you, to both these objections, & to the last, *First*. All providentiall mercyes to the visible Church, and its members , as such , are common Covenant-mercyes: thence wee find the Covenant pleaded , in relation to providentiall deliverances , on the behalfe of the whole visible body of the Church, *Psal. 74. 20.* and God when hee bestowes such mercyes upon such a people , is said to *keep and remember* ; and when hee doth not , to *breake his Covenant*, *Deut. 7. 12, 13.* &c. and *Exod. 6. 5.* and *Zech. 11. 10. &c.* By consequence therefore , every member of that visible body , (and among these (by our principles ) are Infants born , and baptized within the Church) may looke upon every providential mercy as a Covenant-mercy, though of a common nature , *id est* , such as is bestowed in common upon Covenanted Church-members , as such , without any speciall consideration of election , or faith , or any other distinguishing character differencing one from another. And surely , the patience and *goodnesse of God* , if meerely providentiall , *should lead to repentance* , *Rom 2. 4.* much more , if *fœderall*. So that those providences which are common both to Heathens, and Christians in profession , from Infancy , will yet aggravate

*Pædo.*



aggravate the impenitency, and obstinacy of Christians beyond Heathens, because, though [*as providences*] they bee common to men, as men; yet [*as Covenant-providences*] they are common only to those that are within the pale of the visible church; and so are (give mee leave to say,) common within a certaine pale or inclosure.

*Secondly*, Whereas you say, that it seemes these mercyes here considered, are not mercyes derived from the Infant-Covenant, because many such Infants as are visibly in Covenant, and baptized, partake not of them, some through præmature death, others otherwise. I answer, It doth not follow that they are not Covenant-mercyes, to those that enjoy them, because they are not vouchsafed to all in Covenant. For Gods Covenant doth not engage him to bestow the same mercyes upon all Covenanters, no not in temporals. Every Covenantor during his standing within the Covenant hath some mercyes or other flowing to him through it. And I am sure whatever those mercyes are, they are to be made use of as *cords of love* to lead those that enjoy them to repentance. My drift is only to shew, that what-ever deliverances providence vouchsafes a person in Covenant with God from Infancy, are imputable to that Covenant as the spring of them, by a spirit piously disposed to improve them; and as I have instanced in some suiting some such persons, you or any other may enlarge the same consideration to more, as any different experiences of Gods mercy in any sort whatsoever, occurre to them in their  
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owne observation. But an Anabaptist by his principles cannot looke upon any such mercyes vouchsafed in infancy, or before actuall faith, under a Covenant consideration, in any sense; and therefore cannot improve them otherwise, then as meere providences.

I hope *Sir*, you will favourably indulge mee a liberty of pondering what you herein say, as you have done in other particulars before. For indeed I am by experience taught to bee shy of giving in a suddaine assent even to that, against which (for the present) I have nothing to object; and I am assured you will lose nothing in the upshot and issue of your endeavours, by a considering, and therefore slow, disciple. For what you may want of encouragement, by the speedinesse of his through conviction, I am perswaded, in the Issue you will reap in the firmnesse and constancy of his continuance therein. Principles and opinions suddainly taken up, are too often as suddainly layd downe againe. Wherefore I shall lay this aside for second thoughts, and intreate you to proceed to your second head of considerations suggested from Infant Baptisme and its Covenant conducing to conversion; viz. such as emerge from the engagement entered into thereby, on our parts.

The favour you desire, neighbour, is such, as had need in this argument, to bee mutuall. For I my selfe am sensible, how much *second thoughts* in matters of Essay, (as my discourse concerning this subject is) may better ones *first apprehensions*. Something surely there is in these parti-

*After.*

*Pædo.*



particulars, which possibly, I may not have the felicity to expresse so well, as others might, at the first conception of them: and therefore I must also reserve to my selfe a liberty of bettering mine owne notions, or expressions, as upon a deliberate review I shall see cause. But (to draw towards a conclusion of this subject, in the answer of your last proposall) you are to know that the restipulation, or mutuall engagement, that Baptisme layes upon us, is not lesse (on our part) valid, because of its Infant administration, as possibly to some it may seeme to bee. And therefore if Baptismall obligations at any age oblige us to conversion they do so no lesse at Infant-Age: So that here I shall need only to do these two things farther.

1. To shew that our engagement to bee the Lords, sealed on our parts in Baptisme, is never the lesse because that Baptisme was administred in Infancy.

2. To illustrate, and cleare up to you the manner how our Infant-engagement to God derives such considerations as promote conversion.

Pag. 53. 54.

For the first of these, I have given a short hint tending thereto, in my former booke, which I shall now enlarge in a few words. You may therefore understand, that there is a twofold engagement, a *virtuall* engagement, and a *formall* or *expresse* engagement. Then are wee *formally* engaged, when in expresse termes, wee take upon us any obligation; as when a man subscribes his owne hand, and sets his owne seale to a deed or bond; this the Law calls, a *mans owne deed*.

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A *virtuall* engagement, is when I am legally understood to be engaged, though in mine own person I promise nothing, subscribe not, seal not. And such an engagement, is that, which binds a mans *heire, executors and administrators, and assignes* in a bond or deed. The conditions of that bond or deed, are in law requirable at their hands, as if they were by their own personall act undertaken. And the reason of it is this; Those to whom by mee, such a benefit is derived, are supposed in equity to bee equally concerned with mee in the burthen that it carryes with it. The title, which by me such persons claym, *transit cum onere*, as Lawyers say, passeth to them with all incumbrances. So that, there is no way, for my heyre or executor to discharge himselfe of my debts, but by renouncing those incomes, and emoluments upon which the debts are chargeable. To bring the discourse home to the present case. A godly parent or Ancestour, claimes God, as *his God*, and the *God of his seed*, and engageth for him and them, that *hee and his household will serve the Lord*. In testimony whereof hee presents his Issue to baptism, and claims the ratification of that Covenant by solemne Act on Gods part in the face of the Church, as in *open Court*; and withall, subscribes, and seales a counterpart on his owne behalfe and the behalfe of his seed; so that the bond is mutuall. *I will bee thy God and the G. d of thy seede*, saith God on his part. [Know all men by these presents, that I the great God of heaven and earth doe stand bound to such or such a professed beleever, and to his heires, and children from him descending, for the performance of all



*Articles contained in a great Charter or Deed or gift hereunto annexed, called the Covenant of grace &c.] And a believer on his part binds himselfe and his seede to God againe thus. [Bee it knowne to all men by these presents, that I N. do hereby oblige my selfe and my heires, and posterity from mee descending, to the great God of heaven and earth in all the duty required of all true Christians in the said deed, and charter aforesaid, &c.] This on both parts (as to the substance of it) is solemnly done when a Christian parent presents his child to Baptisme. Such a child now being thus related to God and God to him, if hee bee by these mutuall conveighances betweene God and his parents stated in the promises; and enjoy the benefits of the Covenant, as hee doth many wayes (upon our principles before supposed) surely must needs bee as firmly obliged to the duty in them specified; and can no way discharge himselfe, except by an expresse renunciation of that God and Covenant, which hee is thus virtually obliged unto; which yet it is supposed no man, except of desperately forlorne principles will do, seeing hee cannot possibly make a better bargaine for himselfe then his parents have made for him. Nay, a considering child of our principles, when hee comes to age, and considers what a good God hee had, that would accept of him into a Covenant relation so early; and what kind parents hee had, that tooke care to provide so well for him in his very Infancy, as to tender him to that God; will thinke himselfe from a principle of ingenuity and thankfulness, bound in Conscience to renew that*

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that Covenant in his owne person, with all possible speed and seriousness. And this leads mee to the *second* thing promised you upon this head, to shew you, *how the obligation entered into virtually by us in Infant-Baptisme yields considerations furthering conversion.*

I have learned, Sir, in this short discourse, something more of the reasonableness of Infant-Baptisme then before; wherein also, I see the use of that solemn sponson required of parents, (or other neare relations, in case they bee disabled) by your selfe and other ministers, in order thereunto: and therefore I hope, I shall undertake it the more seriously, when-ever I present a child of mine to that ordinance hereafter. I pray you, Sir, perfect your intendment, that I may also thence learne how to lay home to the Consciences of my children their baptismall Engagement for conversion.

I have in a great measure prevented my selfe in this already, by shewing you, the equity of that obligation which Infant-Baptisme layes upon us; unto which if you adde the consideration of the slownesse and backwardnesse most persons are guilty of, in answering this obligation; you may thence draw these moving considerations. *What? my soule, is it not time yet to knock off from the service of the Devill, and thy base lusts? Surely, thou belongest to another, and better Master, whose service thy Christian parents dedicated thee unto from thy Cradle, in whose family thou hast beene educated, and maintained, and whose livery thou hast worn ever since. It cannot bee but that by this time hee expects thou*

*After.*

*Pædo.*



shouldest acknowledge him, and owne thy relation  
 to him, or in plaine and downeright termes re-  
 nounce it altogether. Seest thou not in his laying  
 hands upon thee so soone, that hee likes to bee ow-  
 ned betimes? Surely hee apprehended thee be-  
 time, to let thee know that hee loves young sa-  
 crifices best. Hee accounts it a great favour,  
 that hee accepted of thy name into his roll  
 so early, and hee cannot therefore but  
 charge it upon thee, as a great piece of ingrati-  
 tude, that thou who hast thus long eaten of his  
 bread when thou wast able to doe him no service,  
 shouldest as soone as thou camest to any yeares of  
 choyce, and serviceablenesse, lift up thy heele  
 against him. Psal. 31. 9. If thou couldst find thee  
 a better master, yet surely, thy praengagement  
 is to him; made in thy name by them, whose pro-  
 perty in thee at that time was unquestionable,  
 and whose love to thee was inestimable; and thou  
 oughtest not since thou becamest thine owne man,  
 to have dealt so disingenuously with him, as to  
 continue in his family, and weare his cloth, and  
 yet doe anothers worke for so many yeares as  
 thou hast done. If thou hadst seene cause to have  
 revoked that early Indenture by which thy parents  
 bound thee to his service, why didst thou not ex-  
 pressely, and solemnely renounce the name, as  
 well as the thing; Christianity, as well as Christ;  
 the family and livery, as well as the Master?  
 What hast thou, but that Infant-Covenant, to  
 entitle thee to the Church and its priviledges? Thou  
 that wilt not renounce thy Christendome (as thou  
 callest it) in point of priviledges, and hopes, with  
 what shew of reason canst thou renounce it thus  
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long in point of Duty, and service? Hath not God the counterpart of that Indenture, by which thou claimest? and dost thou thinke hee will owne that Covenant to bee obliging to him, which thou castest behind thy back, and thinkest, or (at least) livest as if thou thoughtest, thy selfe discharged from? Eyther therefore renounce thy Infant-Covenant as null, and make thy selfe a professed Heathen, and then when thou art a freeman, take thine owne choyce, make a Covenant with death, and an agreement with Hell to all intents and purposes, for wages, as well as worke, or else stand to it, and owne thy selfe a reall Christian, by thy owne free consent, for worke, as well as wages. Do not halt thus betweene two Masters. If God bee thy Master, follow him; If the Divell bee thy Master follow him; but not in Gods name, nor Gods livery. 'Tis high time thou shouldest resolve upon what thou wilt betake thy selfe to, God hath wayted long enough, and too long, from thy cradle to this very day, and yet thou playest, fast and loose with him. Sometimes thou art a Christian, because thou dardest not dye or appeare in judgment, with any other name; and yet thou hast no more of Christianity, then was bestowed upon thee at the Font, when thou wast made so, by the tender of thy parens, and upon their undertaking. Dost thou thinke (how farre soever that Covenant might have avayled thee to salvation, hadst thou ayled under an actuall incapacity of confirming it by thine owne consent) that God will account thee an infant still, and save thee upon the same termes? No, no, thou must now renew that Co-

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venant.



venant, and renouncing all other Lords, that have had, since that time, dominion over thee, thou must become his by a voluntary resignation of thy selfe unto him, and his reasonable service; and then thy Christianity so long since received, will bee a strengthening to thy faith, a quickning to thy love, and thankfulness; and thou wilt find many wayes the fruit and advantage of so long a relation to so good a master; which otherwise will but tend to the aggravation of thy sin here, and thy hell hereafter.

Much more might bee added upon this subject but that I am very willing to leave you something to do at home, which should I here say all that can bee said, you would bee prevented of. And therefore I shall (except your dissatisfactions call my meditations into some fresh subject) very willingly draw towards an end of this discourse, which hath growne so much under our hands, that I doubt the length of it, may a little rebate that edge, which a shorter entertainment might possibly have left keener upon your appetite.

*After.*

Indeed Sir, I cannot excuse my selfe from the common infirmity of humane nature (as now it goes) of being apt to bethinke a few minutes spent in holy employments, more then many hours spent in vanities, and follies. But, (whether the unusualnesse, variety, or usefulness of the argument; or mine owne sensible improvement which I find I have made thereby; or the desire I had to get as much furniture as I could to silence opposers, and benefit those of mine owne family by learning first my selfe, and then teaching

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teaching them the use of so profitable an ordinance; bee the cause, I know not) this I can safely say, I have had as little cause to complaine of a tentation to wearynesse during this conference, as ever I found in any thing of that nature. And to shew that the edge of my appetite is not yet dulled with this large entertainment, I will make bold to call for a dish that you promised to make mee partaker of for a close of the banquet, and I believe have not forgotten, and that is the applicatory notes upon the whole subject, which a while since I desired should bee set aside, till now.

Thus then, *neighbour*, (to shut up the whole matter) you see how much advantage many wayes, may bee made of this contemned Ordinance of Infant-Baptisme. And therefore (upon the whole) take these closing animadversions.

[1] That there is a very *profane spirit* fomented in this nation under the wings of Anabaptisme. For how can it bee other then such, which endeavours to extirpate so considerable a meanes for the advance of conversion, and sanctification, as you have seene Infant-Baptisme to bee? May wee not justly impute all those sad miscarriages (even in point of morality, and common honesty) which in the former and present Ages, Anabaptisme hath broken forth into, to this very cause; that such persons weakening that hold which God and they mutually had of each other, have sate the looser from him ever since; and so exposed themselves the more to Tentations, and provoked him to withdraw that assistance,

*Pædo.*



stance, which might have supported them to encounter them? For this is a consequence ordinarily following upon the neglect or contempt of any ordinance of God: constant experience shewing, that as it is not in vaine to draw nigh to him in his owne appointed meanes, (seeme they never so absurd or irrationall to our corrupt reasons:) so it is not safe, to depart from him in any one of them, seeing it is a provoking presumption to expect God will meete us in by-ways of our owne, when wee refuse to go out to meete him in the publique and rode-ways, which hee hath appointed.

[2.] That it is no small advantage that Satan gets by our corrupt reasonings against divine Institutions; seeing thereby hee cuts us off from all that profit and advantage which (whiles wee dispute) wee might husband them unto. Certaine it is, in this particular ordinance, (and might by a serious spirit bee found in divers others) that *disputes and contests are barrin things*: the pious and confiding practiser goes away with the benefit, whiles the curious Questionist is enquiring with Nicodemus, *how can these things bee?* suppose wee therefore, in this case, that hee that conscienciously disputes the right of Infants to Baptisme, comes off with the same satisfaction at last, which others, that make it no matter of dispute at all, enjoy all the while; yet hee must needs after all his reasonings confesse, that hee hath suffered the disadvantage of the losse of so much time for improvement, as hee hath spent in the controverfie.

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[3.] That the caule of Infant-baptisme hath in this respect, lost many of its adherents, because no considerable paines hath beene taken heretofore by Ministers to informe, and by Christians to study the way of improving it. Surely, had those that are now fallen off from this cause, to the adverse party, beene well disciplined herein, and accordingly found the experience of the advantages of Infant Baptisme before-mentioned, they would not have beene so easily perswaded to have submitted it to an ambiguous dispute. And wee may hence by experience learne how to preserve our selves, and those under our charge, who (as yet) are unscrupled in the ordinance, from a temptation of scrupling it; *to wit*, by shewing them what use to make of it: in order whereunto, I judge it were not amisse to have some short Catechisme drawne up for parents, and masters, to teach their children and servants, to that effect. And hereunto, I intend (God willing) to offer my help (according to my small proportion of abilities) in an Essay of that kind, hoping it may not bee altogether unwelcome to serious Christians, nor unprofitable, at least, till such while as an abler hand shall give them a better.

[4.] That parents who present their children to this Ordinance should specially eye the profit of it to those whom they tender to God that way. Which if they do, they will see reason,

1. To labour to affect their owne hearts in that action, with suitable dispositions thereunto.



2. To manage it in such a way as may render it most usefull.

1. The *hearts* of parents in that action should bee affected,

1. *With an high and thankfull esteeme of Gods rich mercy to them, and their families, above others; that hee honours them so farre as to make their issue the nursery of the Church visible: that (like honour given by parent,) Christianity through a Covenant of grace descends in their line, and becomes (in a sort) hereditary. That such an inheritance as the Covenant of grace with all its mercyes, and promises, and priviledges should bee so farre made their Issues peculiar portion, as to bee pleadable in their names as soone as they have a being. That they have such a ground and footing of prayer for them, joy in them; and hope of them, whether they live or dye, as I have before shewen you at large.*

2. *With a serious and sollicitous inquisitiveness into their owne Covenant-relation to God, and covenant walking with him: so as to bee able to plead a saving interest in it for themselves, that so, they may bee furnished with a more lively and vigorous faith to urge it for their posterity: to find out, what occasions or advantages have beene given to God, eyther by their owne or their forefathers sinnes, to infringe that plea; and so repent for them, and renew that Covenant againe, toties quoties, as often as they become parents, with particular respect to such and such children. For although a Church-interest in the Covenant of grace (a visible church-*

church-membership I meane) in the parent, (although there bee no more) sufficiently entitles the child to that Covenant, so farre as hee him-selſe is related to it; and so, bee sufficient ground for his baptisme: yet it is only the godly parent that can plead it in faith for his child, and that so farre, as hee can hope or believe his owne spirituall and saving Interest therein, and takes course that every breach bee made up that may any way weaken his claime.

3. (From hence) *with great measure of faith and confidence*, to the expecting of those Covenant mercyes, which God therein promiseth, and Baptisme seales to his child, to bee effectually powred out upon him in Gods time and way: laying the mouth of faith to that full brest, the grand Charter of believers, [*I will bee thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee*] perpetually sucking, in relation to the present administration, the *sincere milke* of that vast, bound-lesse, endlesse, endlesse clause of entayle [*thy seed, (how many soever) after thee, (for how many Ages soever) in their generations.*] Surely, surely, very few parents bring a faith to their childrens baptisme, large enough for this promise. If they did, who knowes at how vast a distance for future generations, it might come in remembrance before God; so that the child, (give mee leave to speake a word that, though it looke like an Hyperbole, yet to a man that seriously studies that promise, is none) the child (I say) whose great-great grandfather is yet unborne (if, at least, the world last so many generations) may bee the better for it, though ple-  
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ded at so great a distance of time before-hand.

4. (Hence also in the last place) *with abundance of joy and comfort*; looking upon that day, as the *day of their childrens Esponsalls* to Jesus Christ; and by consequence, a day that should bee more joyfull to a godly parent, then, the day of their marriage to the best earthly Matches that possibly can bee desired. If a parent should live to see all his children well married; hee would say, and well hee might (as to the outward condition of his posterity) what an happy man am I that have lived long enough, to see all my children so well disposed of! But I tell all parents that feare God; that the days in which their children are baptized, are farre joyfuller dayes, then the dayes of their marriage (if it might so come to passe) to so many of the most potent and mighty Princes in the world: and thou that hast seene all thy children baptized, hast lived long enough to see them 10000 times better bestowed. Thou hast espoused them to Christ, and hee hath made them a jointure beyond the abilities of all the Monarchs of the world; and therefore write downe the dayes of your childrens Baptisme, as their *wedding-dayes*, and as often as you have occasion to remember them, remember it is your duty to rejoyce in the Lord, and blesse him upon that account.

II. They should manage it in such a way, as may render it most usefull: *id est*, in the most serious, and solemne way that possibly can bee. For my part, I looke upon it, as too great an undervaluing of an ordinance of so great importance,

tance, to huddle it up in such a *private way* as is the custome now to do. Surely, if any opportunity, be more publick then other, that were the fittest of all to bee taken for this use, especially at such a juncture of time as this.

*Partly*, that by the *prayers of many*, the incomes of the Ordinance may be the more plentiful. So that if a Godly man could present his child to God in this way before a *generall assembly* of all the saints over the world, it would bee a thing of leise *pompe* then *profit* so to do, seeing the more of Gods people agree in any request, the more likely (according to the proportion implied in the promise *Matth. 18. 19.*) is it to succcede.

*Partly*, for the more *sollemne ratification* of that *engagement* which a parent then undertakes on the behalfe of his child. The more witnesses there are to the dedication of his child to God, the more conscience of not-fayling afterwards in his education, will any serious man thinke himselfe obliged to make, lest in the mouths of so many witnesses his neglect should bee one day sadly evidenced against him.

And *partly*, because the *scorne* that is by divers persons publickly cast upon this ordinance, seemes to call for a *Publick Profession* at the hands of those who yet remaine fast-friends thereunto. How great an advantage do wee afford the adversaries, whiles wee give them too much appearing ground to insult, that they have hissed our orthodox principles so farre out of countenance, that very few owne them in a publick practise? Surely, wee can never owne  
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any truth publicly in a better season, then when it is most in disgrace. At such a time to appeare on its side, argues a sincere love to it, because, it shewes a spirit ready to *suffer with it*, as well as to *reigne with it*. In a word; shall the adversaries of this Doctrine (as in divers places they do) creepe out of darkenesse, and private corners, and (not blushing at the nakednesse either of their persons or opinions) dip their profelytes at noone-day, and in the open rivers? and shall wee that do nothing unbecoming the day, and all the spectators in the world, creep into corners? No, let us not seeke corners to baptize our Infants in whiles wee *would not*, lest God justly permit the Enemies of the Truth to prevaile so farre, as to force us into them, when wee *would not*.

5. That it cannot but bee very much prejudiciall in reference to all the advantages before-mentioned to accrew from Infant-Baptisme, and the grounds of it, to set narrower limits to that administration, then the Churches of Christ have used to do in former times, or then the grounds, and foundations upon which it is bottomed, will allow. For thereby (should such restriction, universally obtaine) abundance of persons would unjustly bee totally deprived of those advantages, by being excluded from the ordinance, at least under that circumstance of administration whence they emerge. I know it is a matter much disputed by godly and learned men, who are upon the same principles satisfied in the point of Infant-Baptisme, *Whether onely those Infants whose immediate parents, (or*

one of them at least) are visibly Godly, (to which others adde more, and actually joyned to some Church of Christ) are to bee baptized? or all Infants, whatsoever, borne of those that are outward professors, though visibly ungodly? To which I shall not say much, because I desire not to bee a man of strife. Onely, I desire it may bee considered,

1. How those that hold a Covenant-Interest to the Children of Christians, from *Abrahams* *covenant* (as all of Pædobaptists principles do,) will disengage themselves from allowing its full latitude in this particular. If God when hee renewed it by Christ, and enlarged it to Gentiles as well as Jewes, did pare it, and contract it, so as to exclude a great part of those whom it did formerly include, it will bee necessary that it appeare under some authentick record of the New Testament, which yet to mee appears not, and if it do not for the future, I suppose these Queries may bee worthy consideration.

2 1. Whether a Jewes or Profelytes child (supposing the immediate parent to have taken up the profession of Christianity, and thereupon to have beene baptized in the *primitive times*, upon that profession, and afterwards to have broken out, and become visibly ungodly) should or might have beene baptized, or no? If so, the cause is yielded: If not, I farther enquire, Whether, had hee so broken out whiles hee was yet a Jew, or Profelyte to that Church, whether his child had beene capable of circumcision or no? If so, then I cannot see but (according to Pædobaptists principles, that owne the same-  
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nesse of the Covenant that is sealed by circumcision and baptisme) his right to Baptisme will bee thence undeniably concluded also: If *not*, shew mee one Scripture-rule or example for such an exclusion of the child from circumcision upon the account of the visible ungodlinesse of the immediate Parents.

Q. 2. Whether, supposing both the *immediate parents* bee visibly ungodly, a godly *Grandfather* or *Grand-mother* yet living, may claime this priviledge for their *grand child*, or no? If so, then it is granted, that the immediate parents visible ungodlynesse is no such unremovable barre to the childs baptisme: If *not*, I know not (as was before said) how we can hold Infant-membership from *Abrahams charter*, which extends the Covenant upon which it is founded, to his *seed in their generations*, Gen. 17. 7. without holding it in the same extent.

Q. 3. Whether a godly child descending from the loynes of immediate ungodly parents, (suppose Hezekiah, or the like) when hee comes to yeares, may not plead the Covenant of his godly Ancestours, upon the account of the promise in the *second commandment*? If hee *may not*, what pedigree is there in the world in which that promise of *shewing mercy to thousands of generations of them that love God*, will not bee uselesse once or oftener in every 4th or 5th descent? and if so, surely, in my judgment God would have inserted some limitation or *proviso*, to that purpose: If he *may*, I know not why the same promise should not extend to give the church warrant enough to baptize him, whiles an Infant, which  
yields

yields him a ground of faith at Age. If any say, that that intercision or cutting off of the Covenant of Ancestors, in the immediate parent, is restored againe upon his actuall beleaving; I answer, that personall faith in this case, supposeth the ground upon which it acts, it being, before it acts; faith doth not create promises, but lay hold on them already made. So that except the Ancestors promise ( notwithstanding the pretended intercision by the immediate parents ) had still continued in being, & pleadable by faith, the Posterity could not take hold of it by faith, as is supposed.

Secondly I answer, that till actuall faith, though in the child of an immediate godly parent, his owne personall unregeneracy makes as great an intercision in the Covenant descending from him, as to his use, (the pleading of it before God.) as the ungodlynesse of an immediate parent doth in the Covenant of progenitors; for a child of an immediate godly parent, cannot (whiles unregenerate) pleade his Fathers Covenant, more then the child of an immediate ungodly parent, can the Covenant of pro-parents or predecessors; and yet this Covenant in the case of immediate parents, (if Godly) confessedly takes hold of the child, (though unregenerate) in point of *Church-membership*, even whiles it is interrupted in point of *Spiritual improvement and advantage*. It seems therefore that the same should bee granted in the case of pro-parents or predecessors notwithstanding the

G like



like interruption. For faith in the child makes no otherwise a restauration of the immediate parents Covenant, then that of the remote parents; the right to both, (as farre as it depends upon actuall faith in the posterity) being the same. So that the suspending of the Covenant of pro-parents, till actuall faith in the grand-child, or great grand-child, gives the Anabaptist but too much ground to plead the like suspension of the Covenant of immediate parents till actuall faith in the immediate Issue.

2. Herein also it may bee considered how, or upon what account any person, once admitted a member of the Church visible, can bee denied the privilege of a member, (except as farre as such a privilege requires personall and actuall dispositions to render him capable of present possession, which is the cause that divers such are not, though members, admitted to the Lords supper) except hee bee actually excommunicated? Now the privilege of having his children admitted to Baptisme doth not require any such personall actuall qualification in the parent, as the Lords supper doth. It is no where said, *Let the parent examine himselfe*, and so let his child be admitted to Baptism; or let him *be able to discern the Lords body*, &c. and so let him present his child to Baptism, nor any thing like it any where, in Scripture.

Nay even in case of excommunication of both the immediate parents, there is much said in most protestant Divines, that have studied these cases, why the punishment of the parent should not bee extended to the child, seeing the

the offence being but personall, and the punishment but personall ( for no Church excommunicates father and child ) and that not totally destroying the persons membership; it seemes unequall that the parents personall crime and punishment should prejudice the child in any sort, much lesse deprive him of that which hee is not cut off from, his Church-membership.

I onely propound these things to your consideration, by way of corollary from our preceding discourse. If you desire to see this Question more fully stated ( and I judge satisfactorily ) I referre to Mr. *Daniell Cawdreyes Diatribe*, at the end of a dispute betweene him, and Mr *Cotton*, and *Hooker*, called [ *The inconsistency of the Independent way with Scripture, and it selfe.* ] Mr. *Thomas Blakes Vindicia fœderis*, for divers sheets toward the end: and the same Mr. *Blakes Covenant sealed* Chap. 7. sect. 8.

For my part, my intention is not to enter the lists with any one, the world being too full of disputes already. My maine designe in these discourses, hath beene, to perswade such a latitude in the use of Infant baptisme as may render the visibility of Christian profession more large; and yet withall render the sanctified use of it more common then it is, among those, who for want of understanding it, and practising accordingly are rendred most obnoxious to tentations of Apostatizing from it. To both which ends, the Lord bleesse it, to you and all whom it doth concerne: which I shall the more hope hee will, if you, and they joyne their prayers



with mine to that purpose.

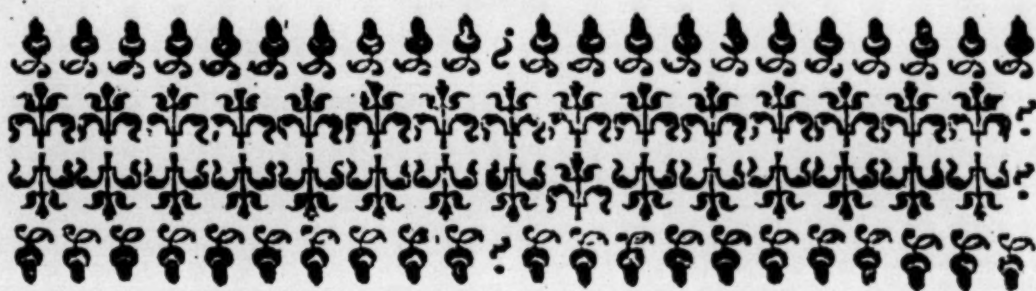
*After.*

And that *Sir*, as farre as I can contribute to so good a worke, you shall not want, by the help of divine assistance. Meane while I shall take the advantage of a little privacy to recollect what I have heard from you in this discourse: resolving (if I meete with any new difficultyes) you shall heare from mee againe, provided you give mee the same liberty which you have hitherto vouchsafed mee.

*Pædo.*

God forbid, *Neighbour*, but my doors should bee alwayes open to such candid, and conscientious reasoners as you have shewne your selfe to bee. And therefore, I say no more at parting but, *The oftner the welcomer.*

F I N I S.



A  
**POSTSCRIPT**  
*Of the*  
**AUTHOR.**

CHRISTIAN READER :



Thought it needfull to  
 advertise thee, that the  
 entertainment the *former*  
*part of this dialogue* hath  
 received from *sober heads,*  
*& pious hearts,* (and some  
 of them (as I am credibly  
 informed) heretofore dis-  
 senters in the Doctrine and practise therein plea-  
 ded) hath been somewhat beyond my expecta-  
 tion,



tion, so that I have been thereby (as well as by the desire of my *Stationer*) encouraged to hasten this *Second Impression* thereof. Notwithstanding which, I delayed it the longer, that I might receive some private letters from some *reverend men* whose judgment I was willing to take along with mee, and whose assistance I much desired to render it more compleate: and also, that I might see, whether (during that while of my delay) any thing would bee offered by any *dissenter*, that would require my farther animadversions thereupon. And I humbly thanke my learned and godly friends, to whom I made my applications, for the assistance which I have received from them, whether by way of concurrence with, or dissent from mee; acknowledging that I am much obliged to them for their Christian opennesse and candour testified in those intimations privately vouchsafed mee. And in testimony thereof, I have laboured, in this *second part* (a great measure whereof hath been occasioned by the hints suggested from them) to manifest no lesse candour in the handling of those particulars so intimated, whether in the points *agreed*, or *controverted* betweene us.

And I hope, if yet any of their judgments shall not jumpe with mine, eyther as to matter or language; that (neverthelesse) they will candidly accept of my endeavours, to satisfie them, in declaring the grounds of mine owne. But if it should prove otherwise, however, I must intreate them to gratifie my utter avernesse

ness to publique contests, by a private agitation of the differences that yet remaine, rather; then to enforce mee unto any disputes from the presse, wherein I dayly observe how difficult a matter it is to manage a friendly and candid debate of differences, in a way becoming Christian moderation.

And to engage them thereunto, I have purposely concealed the names of most of those, with whom I have had to do in this friendly intercourse of private letters, that they may not conclude *themselves* in any sort challenged to appeare that way; And I promise that if I bee yet called upon for *another review* of these Treatises, I shall do my best, eyther by qualifying, explaining, or retracting, what shall yet remaine offensive to any sober, and judicious friends, (upon like notice given mee, from any of that character) to endeavour their farther satisfaction.

And the same course should I have been willing to have taken with the \* *Author of a late Treatise concerning Infant-Baptisme*, (one neare enough to mee to have been so friendly) in case he would have been perswaded to have given mee privately a *copy of his exceptions*, (which, by a friend, I desired, when I heard he was about to print) and to have expected a while, the coming forth of this piece for his satisfaction. But it seems, his fingers itched to bee printing and aspersing my selfe, and others of his neighbour-Ministers, who gave him as little provocation, as (I thinke) I have done. And

Mr. W. of  
Br. in this  
County.



Dialogue  
first edi-  
tion, pag.  
78. and  
this edi-  
tion p. 76,  
and 77.

indeed, hee hath dealt very unhandsomely with some of *them*, even to the personating of *them*, by certaine characteristicall passages knowne to the Countrey thereabout, in severall other Pamphlets published together with that wherein I am concerned. But I shall not trouble thee with any particulars, save those that relate to the *former part of this Dialogue*: out of which (in his booke mentioned, pag. 15, 18, 19, 20, 21.) hee takes a passage or two concerning the *comparison* there made betweene *Infant-Baptisme* and *Leaven*, in relation to the *spreading of Christian Religion*, in the outward Profession thereof, over whole nations: and my affirmation thereupon, that [*I conceive it morally impossible to rize Christian Religion into the body of any Nation, but by the way of Infant-Baptisme*, this being the *only likely way* to the effecting of what our Saviour comands, the *discipling of whole Nations*;] Upon which passages the said Author tragcially descants, as favouring of a [*mistake of Christs command, and serving only to hold and keepe Popery within us, yea, as grosse Popery as a man can readily thinke of, and bring persons into a fooles Paradise, and enlarge the bounds of the Malignant Church* (i. e. in his owne professed sense) a *Nationall one*.]

pag. 19.

An heavy charge, but wholly misapplied through (I feare) a *wilfull mistake*; (for how can I judge it lesse, being grounded upon a grosse perverting of the whole declared, and expresse sense of the *paragraph*, against which it is levelled?) How often (Reader) doe I there expref-

expressely confine my assertions concerning [ the spreading, and rivetting of Religion in a nation, by Infant-Baptisme ] to the Church visible, and the profession of Religion in a nation, and visible believers ! Nay the very next Question moved thereupon, and the Answer thereunto, clearly proceed upon the supposition of that sense.

And yet this Author, will ( in despite of mine owne cleare expressions, and the whole scope of the discourse ) perswade mee and his reader, that by [ rivetting the profession of Religion into the body of a Nation, ] I meane the [ rivetting of Religion in the soules & spirits of men ] ( for so, he tells us expressely, that hee and his confederates, who, it seemes, know my meaning better then my felse, understand it ) and ( answerably ) that by the [ leavening of Nations, in the same way ] I meane, [ leavening them with grace: ] or else I know not what hee means by opposing the work of Infant-Baptisme, and the spirit of life and glory, in relation to this leavening worke, in the same place.

And upon these grosse mistakes, hee spends a great deale of waste paper, to informe his Reader, that Infant-Baptisme is not Christs way to disciple, ( i.e. savingly to convert ) nations; and that hee must not make that sacrament an Idoll, and expect the work of grace to be wrought upon the soule; by the sprinkling of water upon the body: and all this ( quis crederet? ) out of a great feare ( as hee professeth ) lest somebody ( of like



Pag. 21.

like acute intellectualls (belike) with himselfe, and his Brethren) *should put a sense upon my expressions quite contrary to my scope, and intention; to witt, [to encourage themselves, some to superstition, and others, to place all their religion in Baptisme.]* But mee thinkes, if this good friend of mine bee so much affraid lest others should abuse my words to such a sense, hee should not bee the first that should teach them so to do. To tell them, that I meane by [*rivetting religion into the body of a nation by Baptisme*] the [*rivetting it into their soules and spirits,*] as hee doth; and yet withall to professe his feares, lest others should take it in such a sense, as might encourage them in such a mistake of superstitiously esteeming, and *placing all their religion in it*, which is no lesse then *attributing the [inward worke of the spirit to outward baptisme;]* seemes something of kin to a contradiction.

Thus Reader, thou mayst see how little I am concerned, to answer *this Author* in this mater: seeing hee proceeds upon a sense given to my words (according to his owne confession) *quite contrary to my scope, and intention.* And yet there remaines another sad reckoning, which hee threatens mee withall (in the same place) to call mee unto againe concerning *this, and two or three other passages towards the end of that booke of mine, in a sixth Treatise of his, which I have not seene; and the presse cannot now stay for my enquiry after and examination thereof, (it having beene delayd some weekes already, during*

ring

ring my expectation of *this part*, which I have now taken notice of, from my *Stationer*, to whom I sent to procure it) or if it could, I know not by what name to send for it, (having by mee no catalogue of this Authors workes to direct mee) and therefore can say nothing to it at this Time. And indeed if it bee no more *concerning* to mee, then this already mentioned; I promise thee, I never shall thinke it worth thy trouble or mine to take any notice of it at any Time. However, I *forgive him this wrong*; considering, that his exceeding passionate zeale against any thing that in his judgment tended to the supporting of a *Nationall Church*, (which is the abomination of abominations to his soule; and all one, (as his expression, but now quoted hath it) with a *Popish*; and *Malignant Church*, (hath made him so angry, that hee cannot (in that humour) but fall out with any one hee meets, not duely enquiring whether they bee friends or foes; or whether there bee any just cause, to quarrell with them or no: and I resolve (as farre as I know mine owne mind) never to enter the lists of a publique dispute with a man of that temper. To shut up all, I shall only crave leave to offer a little advice to my *Reverend Brother*, whom I beleeve to be a godly man, and know to bee Zealous in his principles (perhaps too much) that hee do not engage himselfe too hotly in clashings, and contests with his neighbour-Ministers and others, about such things, as they are perswaded, the *Kingdome of God doth not consist in*,  
left



left hee lose the quiet of his owne spirit, and the comfort and help of his fellow-labourers gifts, together with the affections of a refractory people, who (as I know by some experience,) being dealt with over-rigorously in such things by ministers, will bee too much exasperated, to bee capable of receiving any thing from them without prejudice: In summe, that hee do not thinke, the bespatterring of his neighbour-Ministers, and their principles, actions, congregations, and communion, a regular way to increase his owne separated fellowship. And having so *done*, I have *done with him*, for this time: and shall with thee too, when I have (in a word) informed thee; that (because the variety of new matter which offered it selfe to my second thoughts, grew quickly to such a quantity as would have made too great an alteration, in the *renewed impression*, of my *Booke formerly published*, even so much as to make it uselesse to those who had layd out their money upon it before, and so necessitate them to buy it againe, if I should have inserted it therein;) I thought it more expedient (contrary to my intentions when I published the *Epistle* prefixed thereunto) to let the *First-Booke* come forth againe without any alteration (except in few words) and subjoyne the additions in a distinct Treatise by themselves, which, as I now put into thy hands, so I hope, God will give thee grace to make a profitable use of, to his

his owne  
about Infe  
ment of it  
own fault.

his owne glory, the turning *vaine janglings*  
*about Infant-Baptisme*, into a *practicall improve-*  
*ment* of it, and ( therein ) the benefit of *thine*  
*own soule*.

*F A R E - V V E L L .*



## ERRATA.

Reader,

*Thou art intreated by the Author to overlooke  
divers lesse faults, which thou mayst  
meet withall: and correct with thy pen  
before thou readest, these greater escapes,  
which the presse because of the Authors  
distance hath made.*

In the *Epistle Dedicatory*, Pag. 8. lin. 4. read  
*whithout which.* In *Mr. Bl. Preface*, p. 4. l. ult.  
dele, *that.*

In the *First Treatise*, pag. 2. l. 21. read *is.*  
pag. 5. l. 29. read *unto.* p. 6. l. 28. read *did I.* p. 20  
lin. 25 — 26. dele *at most.* l. 30. r. *this.* pag. 23.  
l. 28. r. *stronger.* p. 39. l. 24. r. *decayes,* p. 41.  
l. 20. r. *meditation.* p. 53. l. ult. r. *care.* p. 70.  
l. 20 read *concluded.*

*Sermon of Catechizing.* p. 4. l. 28. r. *teens.* p. 10.  
l. 26. r. *there.* p. 13. l. 3. r. *tartly.* p. 16. l. 1.  
read *charily.*

In the *Second part.* p. 7. l. 21. r. *dared.* p. 9. l. 21.  
r. *renew.* p. 18. l. 10. r. *not.* p. 25. l. 12. read  
(*being such in their generall nature*) p. 30. l. 14.  
r. *effect.* p. 75. l. 12. dele *to.* p. 81. l. 21. r. *himself.*  
p. 82. l. 1. r. *of.* Pag. 97. l. 6. r. *in.* l. 18. r. *this.*

In the *Postscript*, pag. 108. l. 29. read *a few.*

make  
mayst  
by pen  
scapes,  
authors

read  
l. ult.

read u.  
p. 20  
p. 23.  
p. 41.  
p. 70.

p. 10.  
p. 11.

p. 21.  
read  
p. 14.  
self.  
hu.  
few.



A letter is a kind of conference or communication  
of one mind with another as if he were present  
letters now are used to inform friends in  
the time of their absence. of those occasions that  
chiefly concerns them.

How a letter should be writ. It ought to be  
referred to the place, to the time, and to the person  
on his affairs. and so to be beginning from either  
of such things as we are to write of.

A Riddle. On Evening as cold as cold night  
with frost, hail and pinching weather.  
companions about 3 times. lay close all in  
a round together, yet one after another  
they took heat, and died that night all in  
a snow!

*[Faint signature or scribble]*

and  
his  
Obid.  
pithy  
communion with  
to obscure in us, that we are faine to  
Grove after him in the darke, with  
whom  
the  
ban  
son

unthankfulness dissolve into nothing  
by





3. The consideration of that knowledge of God and those morall vertues in the very *Gentiles*, should shame and reprove many amongst us, who, even amidst the glorious *Light* of the Holy Gospel, do fall farre short of them. There are many men, even in the Christian world, who, out of a certain proud curiosity, and damnable *Scepticism*, will call into question the very being of God, and thinke they are then more learned, when they contradict the unanimous consent and current of all men: and there are others againe, who, out of an affected kind of *Atheisme*, and that they might better pr *aise* their impieties, do endeavour to suppress and smother all thoughts arising in them of God, Providence, Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell. The former of these you may terme the *Speculative*, the latter the *Practicall Atheist*, then whom, saith

*Picus*

for Lord, Prov. 20. 27. Now so overcharged with ignorance, unbelief and falsehood; with ignorance, in being not able to fathome either naturall Causes or supernaturall mysteries; with unbeliefe, in its backwardnesse to assent unto such things which are beyond the reach of purblind nature; and with falsehood, in its misapprehending and misjudging the truths of God: to see likewise what rebellious tumults and disorders there are in those *Affections*, which Originally were quietly subordinated unto the dictates and guidance of Reason; how madly they cast off the reins, and rush into sinne, as a horse rusheth into the battle; how wildly they rage and Tyrannize over the discursive rationall facultie, either bribing it to assent unto such things which upon deliberation it must needs disapprove off, or else violently tugging and haling it to

D 3

give

the Lord man that hath served you  
in the submission